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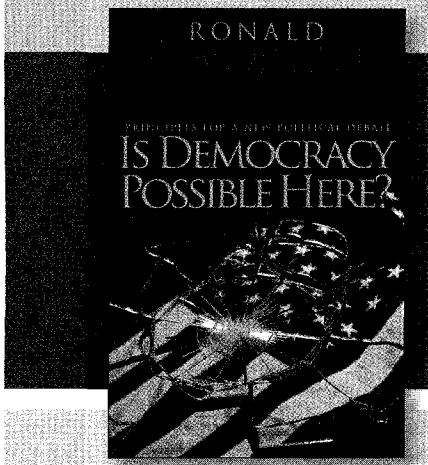
Examining Democracy



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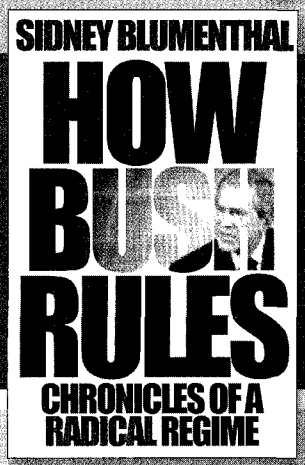

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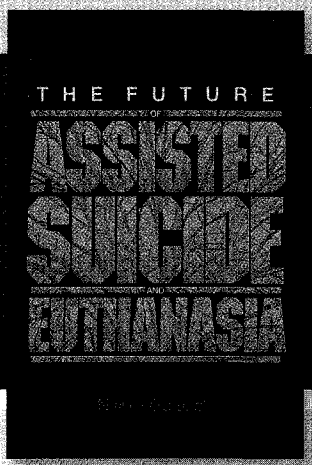

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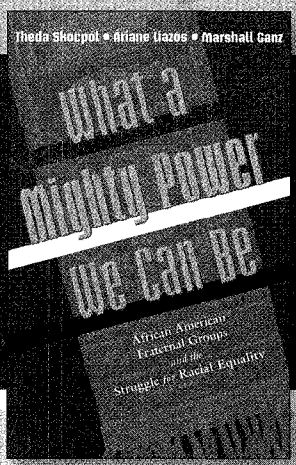
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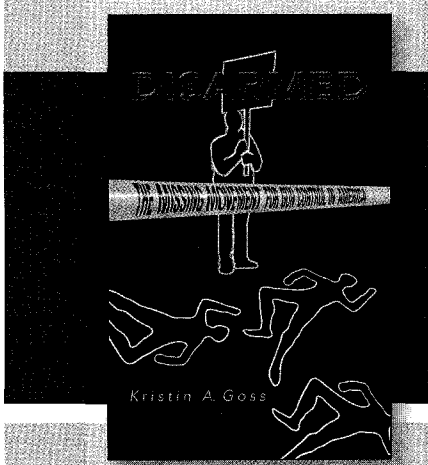

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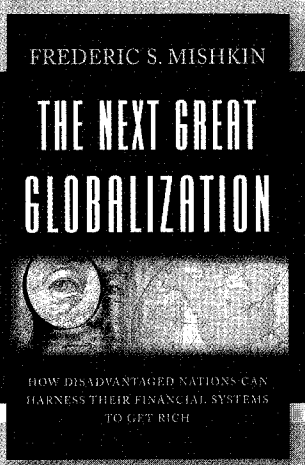
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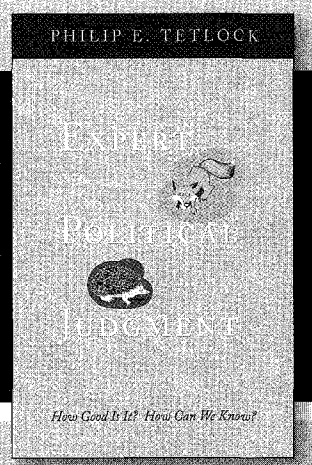

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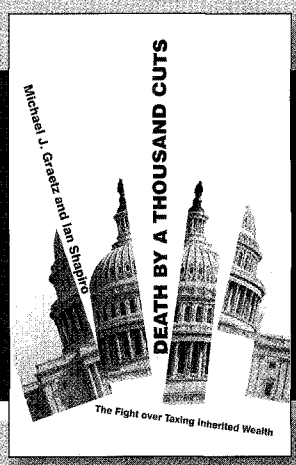

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CORRESPONDENCE

RENAISSANCE MEN

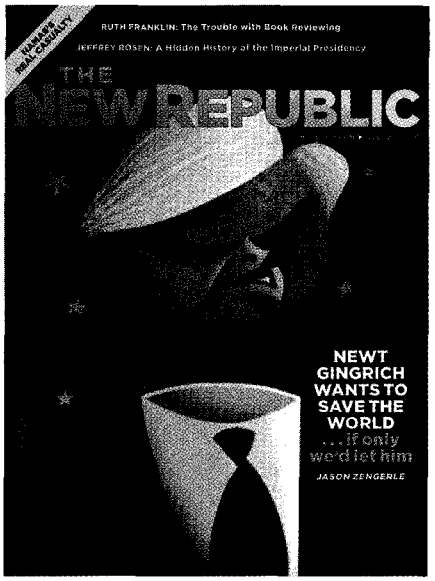
PETER BEINART IGNORES ACTUAL evidence that allowing gay marriage may encourage straight men to marry gays ("Judge Knot," July 24). In classical Athens and Renaissance Florence—and probably Renaissance London, as well—men had gay sex in numbers far greater than current statistics on "homosexual identity" suggest they would. Indeed, one study published by Oxford University Press in 1996, Michael Rocke's *Forbidden Friendships: Homosexuality and Male Culture in Renaissance Florence*, demonstrates conclusively—with extensive documentary evidence—that, between 1432 and 1502, nearly half of Florentine males were officially cited for having homosexual relations.

Of course, one can interpret this evidence any number of ways. But surely one interpretation is that allowing gay marriage might be a sufficient incentive to cause some percentage of straight men, however small, to marry gays while enjoying no-strings heterosexual relations with women. Let me put this another way. The question for proponents of same-sex marriage has always been this: Do homosexuals choose homosexuality? Rocke's evidence suggests that, even if the answer to that question is no, there remains another question: Do heterosexuals choose homosexuality? The historical record and a great deal of ancient commentary on male sexuality show that they do.

NICK CARIELLO
Chapel Hill, North Carolina

JOE A DEAR

I DON'T AGREE WITH JASON ZENGERLE'S take that Joe Lieberman's reelection challenges were his fault or that he went "national," forgetting the people of Connecticut ("Cuppa Joe," July 31). I think Lieberman is a victim of the anger among Democratic activists toward the Bush administration. Democrats in Connecticut who have concerns about the senator often take issue with his position on Iraq, then pivot to a diatribe against the president and his team. They are using Lieberman—wrongly, I would argue—as a container for their anger toward the administration. Are there ebbs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THE NEW REPUBLIC
NEWT GINGRICH WANTS TO SAVE THE WORLD
...if only we'd let him
JASON ZENGERLE

and flows to Joe Lieberman the politician as a result of 2000 and 2004? He would not be human if there weren't. But his political track record since 2000 hardly suggests he is wounded or out of touch with his party: He helped create the Department of Homeland Security and establish the directorate of national intelligence, and he challenged the White House on its response to Katrina and its poor environmental record.

Joe Lieberman just does what he thinks is right. On Iraq, he has been critical of the administration's failure to plan for the postwar period. And he has never supported setting dates for withdrawal anywhere: Look at his stand against setting a withdrawal date from Bosnia, when many politicians were calling on President Clinton to announce one.

WILLIAM C. DANVERS
Arlington, Virginia

DRUG PROBLEM

BEYOND EZEKIEL J. EMANUEL'S criticisms, there are two additional reasons to abhor courts altering the FDA approval process for cancer drugs ("Drug Addiction," July 3). The first is consumerism in medicine. If letting the patient have what she wants becomes the basis for medical practice, then there is no difference between medicine and commerce. But there *is* a difference. A terminally ill patient is not just a consumer of medical goods—able to make good or bad choices in the same way she chooses vitamins or other food supplements. For patients with terminal illness, making bad choices has irreparable consequences. Second, the policy amounts to legitimizing the use of placebos. The medical profession considers the prescribing of placebos unethical. There can be no trust between doctor and patient if worthless drugs can be administered unwittingly. Treating cancer is hard enough without a policy that permits patients and families to doubt whether the oncologist is offering something of benefit.

CHARLES F. VON GUNTEN
Director
Center for Palliative Studies
San Diego, California

READING DISPLEASURE

IN HIS SUPERB APPRAISAL OF *CAMUS at Combat: Writing 1944–1947*, Joseph Frank fails to note an increasingly common flaw: the lack of an index ("The Editorialist as Hero," July 24). No doubt the bottom-liners at Princeton University Press have a reason, but the result is lamentable. I'm sure it made Frank's reviewing more difficult, just as it made my reading less pleasurable.

ROBERT CARLSON
Evanston, Illinois

STUDENT'S PET?

AS A STUDENT OF RICHARD HOFstadter in the late '50s, I enjoyed Sean Wilentz's perceptive review of David Brown's *Richard Hofstadter: An Intellectual Biography* ("What Was Liberal History?" July 10 & 17). But I would like to add a small note about one unmentioned aspect of Hofstadter's

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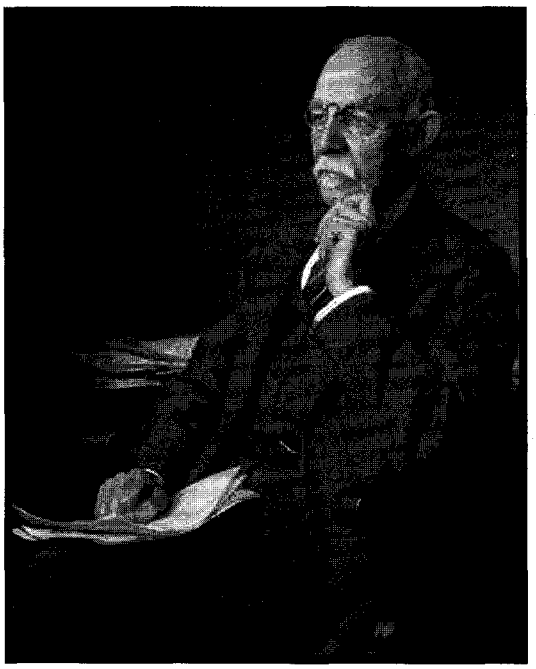
The Addict Who Invented Modern Surgery

At the beginning of the drug war in 1914 a public health survey of narcotics addicts found that "a very large proportion of the users...were respectable hard-working individuals in all walks of life..." It seems shocking now to hear that 80 percent of these "dope fiends" had jobs, homes and reputations but the medical literature is filled with addicts on maintenance doses who functioned normally throughout their lives. One of the most remarkable was Dr. William Stewart Halsted.



He was already a prominent surgeon in Manhattan while still in his twenties. Shortly after the Civil War Dr. Halsted discovered that cocaine could be used as a local anesthetic – a major leap for modern surgery. But Halsted was also experimenting on himself and he found that when he injected the drug into a vein he got a rush that was better than sex.

To wean him off his ferocious cocaine habit Halsted's friends chartered a schooner and shipped him off to the Virgin Islands. They managed to keep him clean for a couple of months but as soon as he hit the beach he started shooting up again. In a last ditch effort he checked himself into a hospital in Providence and through sheer will power he was completely cured. Or so the story went.

Halsted's skill and ingenuity as a surgeon made him world famous and in 1886 he joined three other renowned physicians to create Johns Hopkins Hospital. His private life was as exemplary as his dazzling medical career and he died peacefully at 70. The fairytale would have ended there except for the little black book.

On the eightieth anniversary of Johns Hopkins the book was opened according to the instructions of its author, Sir William Osler, and in it was the "secret history" of the Hopkins. It turns out that Halsted had cured his cocaine habit by switching to morphine. In other words, one of the four founders of Johns Hopkins was a morphine addict for over forty years, and while one colleague knew all about it, the others never suspected. Throughout his career Halsted tried to kick but he was never able to get by with less than 180 milligrams a day. "On this," said Dr. Osler, "he could do his work comfortably and maintain his excellent physical vigor."

Halsted's story is revealing not only because it shows that a morphine addict on the proper maintenance dose can be productive. It also illustrates the incredible power of the drug in question. Here was a man with almost unlimited resources-moral, physical, financial, medical—who tried everything he could think of and he was hooked until he the day he died.

Today we would send a man like that to prison. Instead he became the father of modern surgery.

Common Sense for Drug Policy
www.CommonSenseDrugPolicy.org www.DrugWarFacts.org
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Text excerpted from *Drug Crazy*, Mike Gray, Random House 1998

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Speak Not

TRB FROM WASHINGTON

A FEW WEEKS AGO, CONGRESSIONAL Democrats announced their agenda for the fall campaign. Its substance was unremarkable: raising the minimum wage, making college tuition tax-deductible, putting more money into alternative energy. But the really encouraging part was the public reception. Or should I say, the *lack* of public reception: Barely anyone noticed. And, for Democrats, that's very good news.

If this fall's midterms become a referendum on the incumbent president and his party, they will be a bloodbath. With approval ratings south of 40 percent, George W. Bush may prove the least popular president to preside over a midterm election since Harry Truman in 1950. And the Republican Congress is even less popular—with less than one-third of Americans approving of its performance. Historically, when Congress's approval rating falls below 40 percent, the incumbent party loses an average of 29 seats in the House—double the number Democrats need to regain control.

So it's hardly surprising that Republicans want Democrats to offer a detailed agenda; it helps them change the subject. In 2004, when most Americans were unhappy with the nation's direction, the Bush campaign insisted that the election was not a referendum, it was a choice. And, while the Bushies couldn't convince most voters that the country was going in the "right direction," they convinced enough of them that John Kerry was effete, duplicitous, and weak that 51 percent stuck with the devil they knew. Now, as *The Weekly Standard*'s Fred Barnes has reported, the White House wants to make 2006 "a choice election, not a referendum election" as well. And the more Democrats say about what they would do in office, the better that strategy will work. As House Majority Whip Roy Blunt told Barnes, the Democrats' "best day will be the day before they release their agenda. Suddenly [Republican] policies will look like the policies that would work best in the future."

But, while it's easy to see why Republicans want Democrats to outline an agenda, why are so many Democrat-friendly pundits offering the same advice? The answer is the "Contract with America" myth. In 1994, according to legend, Americans were frustrated with Bill Clinton and the Democratic Congress, but they only decided to vote Republican in the campaign's closing weeks—after Newt Gingrich and company strode onto the Capitol steps on September 27 and announced their ten-point "Contract" with the nation. Six weeks later, the GOP had picked up an astonishing 54 seats and taken control of the House for the first time in 40 years.

For newly elected Speaker Gingrich, who wanted to claim a mandate for his right-wing agenda, the myth proved useful—and it has stuck. But it's nonsense. Few Republican candidates mentioned the Contract in their TV ads. As Democratic pollster Mark Mellman has noted, a CBS poll one week before the election found that 71 percent of voters had never heard of the Contract—and those who had were just as likely to support Democrats.

The real reason for the GOP's 1994 landslide was this: Republicans expressed their anger at Bill Clinton and the Democratic Congress by voting Republican, and Democrats expressed their anger by staying home. Republicans, according to a Gallup poll taken just before the election, were 15 points more likely than Democrats to declare themselves "enthusiastic" about voting. That enthusiasm was prompted by Clinton's gun control bill, his gays-in-the-military proposal, his failed health care initiative, and the tax hike in his 1993 budget. Democrats, by contrast, were distinctly unenthusiastic about NAFTA, which Clinton had pushed through over the labor movement's objections. On Election Day, the result was a sharply skewed electorate. Thirty-eight percent of voters declared themselves "conservative," compared with only 30 percent in 1992. Thirty-three percent identified with the religious right, up nine points from 1992. Turnout among blacks, Latinos, and the poor—key Democratic constituencies—fell, while turnout among the wealthy, who generally lean Republican, rose.

It was, in other words, the mirror image of this year. Today, according to the Pew Research Center, Democrats are 16 points more likely to declare their enthusiasm for voting. Only 42 percent of Republicans and Republican-leaning independents are happy with their party's performance, down 19 points from 2004. And a plurality of *Republicans* think most members of Congress don't deserve reelection. This year, in other words, disgust will likely propel Democrats to the polls and leave Republicans sitting at home.

For the White House, getting these surly GOP couch potatoes to vote is the only way to prevent political Armageddon. And the best way to do that is to get them so enraged about the Democrats that they forget their frustration with their own side. That's why congressional Republicans spent the summer dredging up wedge issues like gay marriage, abortion, and flag-burning. It's why Dick Cheney said Ned Lamont's Connecticut Senate primary victory might embolden Al Qaeda. And it's why Republicans keep trying to bait Democrats into unveiling a detailed agenda—in hopes of convincing Republican voters that, no matter how disappointing Bush has proved, the other guys would be worse.

But, so far, the Democrats have not played along: They have kept their proposals vague, and the press has paid little attention. And, with any luck, it will stay that way in the coming months. As much as possible, Democrats should stick to vacuous slogans like "time for a change" and "had enough?" Their big advantage is that midterm elections are hard to frame as a "choice," because, unlike in a presidential race, there is no single Democratic figure the GOP can demonize. In all likelihood, only one national politician will be on voters' minds when they go to the polls this November, and it won't be Nancy Pelosi or Harry Reid or Howard Dean.

Presidential elections are completely different. As John Kerry learned in 2004 (and Michael Dukakis learned in 1988), when you seek the White House, you either offer a vision that resonates with Americans or you lose—even against a weak incumbent. Two years from now, Democrats will need to articulate that vision. Today, however, they need to say something much simpler: "We're not George W. Bush." And then shut up.

PETER BEINART

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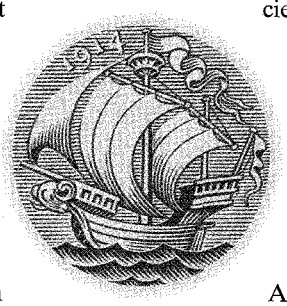
Fared Well

SOMETIMES THE SOUND of success is silence. It was ten years ago that President Clinton signed into law a landmark welfare-reform bill, reinventing the signature New Deal program upon which millions of poor Americans had come to depend—and provoking a firestorm of criticism, mostly from his own political party. The new law sought to make assistance available to only those beneficiaries who worked—and, even then, for only a limited time. While proponents predicted reform would break the cycle of poverty, the measure's opponents called it a "brutal assault on the poor." Key members of Clinton's Cabinet opposed the measure, and three administration officials actually resigned over it.

No such outcry has greeted the program's ten-year anniversary; if the press hadn't mentioned it, it's not clear anybody would have even noticed. The public preoccupation with more urgent matters has something to do with this lack of attention. But the most important reason that welfare reform no longer stirs passions is that it just isn't very controversial anymore. A broad consensus now holds that welfare reform was certainly not a disaster—and that it may, in fact, have worked much as its designers had hoped.

In many ways, that consensus is correct. The old welfare program, known as Aid to Families with Dependent Children, reflected the era in which it was born. Its main purpose was to provide money to widowed mothers so they could support their families without having to enter the workforce. But, by the 1980s, unwed mothers had replaced widows as welfare's archetypal recipients. Many middle-class families began to resent the idea of paying higher taxes so the poor could live on the dole. And even some experts on the left began to concede that welfare was structured in a way that fostered a permanent underclass dependent on government handouts.

Clinton embraced welfare reform back in his 1992 presidential campaign, arguing that welfare "should be a second chance, not a way of life." And, when he put it that way, virtually everyone agreed. The problem, critics warned, was with execution. It was fine and good to say welfare recipients had to work. But where would they find jobs? What about child care? Making matters worse, the bill Newt Gingrich's Republican Congress produced only faintly resembled the generous measure that Clinton had talked about.



But, after signing that bill, Clinton made good on his promise to correct the most egregious flaws of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), as the new program was called. And governors from across the country surprised skeptics by investing heavily in programs to ease the transition from welfare to work. Perhaps because of those efforts—or because the bill's architects were right about many things—the dire predictions never came true. Welfare rolls shrank while more single women entered the workforce. Teen pregnancy fell, too. And, while the statistics on income leave room for conflicting interpretation, most experts agree that, on the whole, former welfare recipients are slightly better off than before, even though the economy has slowed in the Bush era.

Yet doing "better" is not the same thing as doing "well," and many of those who made the leap from welfare to work are having trouble climbing the economic ladder. They find themselves struggling to pay for housing, child care, and medical care. Millions of families have left the dole only to join the working poor.

But this is a failure of the U.S. economy, not the measure that became law in 1996. And welfare reform, far from making this problem more intractable, actually makes it easier to solve. We know what helps people lift themselves out of poverty—programs like Section 8 housing vouchers, government-run health insurance, and the Earned Income Tax Credit. What we have lacked is the political will to bolster these programs sufficiently. The old welfare system had a lot to do with this: It cast public doubt on the Democratic Party and the very notion that government programs can work. But that has changed. Today, welfare-bashing has lost its political resonance. And, by blurring the distinctions between the poor and middle class, welfare reform has expanded the constituency for activist government. Democrats now have more political room to fight Republican austerity—and to propose, in its place, a stronger safety net. The silence that greeted welfare reform's anniversary was heartening. But now it's time to make some noise. ■

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The GOP purge.

Growing Pains

BY MICHAEL CROWLEY

FOR ALL INTENTS and purposes, the only national political story on August 8 was Ned Lamont's defeat of Joe Lieberman in Connecticut's Democratic Senate primary. But all that Nedrenaline obscured another anti-incumbent surprise the very same night. In Michigan's Seventh District, Republican Representative Joe Schwarz was knocked off by a conservative primary challenger. It was an ominous sign of the national mood for sweaty-palmed Washington Republicans. But it was also significant for another reason: The Club for Growth had finally scalped its first incumbent. Founded in 1999 by a group of wealthy supply-siders, the Club has long annoyed the GOP establishment with its freelance efforts to replace weak-kneed moderates with purebred economic conservatives (the Club has little interest in social issues). In Michigan last month, it finally succeeded. The Club spent more than $1 million to help Tim Walberg, an evangelical minister who has pledged never to support a tax increase, to beat Schwarz, a sometime opponent of Bush's tax cuts, by a 53–47 margin. "Michigan Republican voters sent a clear message to Congress that they are tired of the big-spending, big-government policies that contributed so much to Joe Schwarz's downfall," the Club gloated in a press release afterward.

As the Michigan primary demonstrates, the Club for Growth is a conservative analog to the liberal blogs hell-bent on eliminating Lieberman. As in Connecticut, losing party control wasn't an issue in Michigan, where Democrats doubt they can mount a serious challenge against Walberg. But, as the Club moves on to its next big battle, it is finding that the stakes—and risks—of its strategy are much greater. The political world may be riveted by liberal ideologues trying to oust Joe Lieberman. But it's *conservative* ideologues, led by the Club for Growth, who may wind up delivering the U.S. Senate into Democratic hands.

SINCE ITS INCEPTION, the Club for Growth has been a stone in the shoe of Washington Republicans. Party leaders may share the Club's core ideology of maximum tax cuts and spending reductions, but they also recognize the reality of the electorate—namely that Republicans from moderate states and districts shouldn't commit political suicide in the name of ideology. So, when the Club began mounting primary challenges against Northeastern moderates like Sherwood Boehlert and Marge Roukema, it did so in opposition to congressional GOP leaders. ("We can't have this infighting between conservatives and moderates and maintain our majority," Tom DeLay grumbled to *The Washington Post* in 2000.) When the Club ran TV ads attacking moderate Republican senators who had been opposing a 2003 Bush tax cut, Karl Rove pronounced the move "stupid." And many Republicans were furious in 2004 when the Club spent $2.3 million in a bid to end Arlen Specter's 24-year Senate career. Its chosen candidate, right-wing Pennsylvania Representative Pat Toomey—who ripped Specter as a "dangerous liberal"—came within two points of succeeding, even though few Republicans believed Toomey could survive a general election.

After that race, Toomey assumed control of the Club. (He replaced its press-friendly founder, Steve Moore, over internal-management feuds, including whether Moore had spent enough on Toomey's campaign.) And now he's waging a redux of his Senate campaign in Rhode Island. In the crosshairs this time is the state's Republican senator, Lincoln Chafee. The genially eccentric Chafee, a liberal Republican in the old New England tradition, is being challenged by Cranston Mayor Stephen Laffey. Rhode Island might be one of the most Democratic states in the country, but, among its conservative Republican voters, Chafee has achieved Lieberman-like levels of infamy. The Club for Growth particularly hates Chafee for his repeated resistance to ever-larger tax cuts for the rich. It's no surprise, then, that Laffey—with the aid of nearly $1 million in club support—has been catching on. With the September 12 primary approaching, one recent poll showed Laffey and Chafee in a virtual dead heat.

Just as the Washington Democratic establishment rushed to defend Lieberman, so are Beltway Republicans battling to keep Chafee alive. Last year, top GOP officials like Rove and Elizabeth Dole tried, and failed, to keep Laffey from running. But their efforts only seemed to goad Laffey, a blustery populist who hosted a Limbaugh-esque talk-radio show until campaign laws forced him off the air. "Those guys down in Washington said I shouldn't run. They know I can't be controlled," he sneered last fall. The establishment hit back. In a remarkable act of intraparty hostility, the National Republican Senatorial Committee (NRSC) filed a Federal Election Commission complaint against Laffey this summer, charging him with mailing a political flier at Cranston taxpayers' expense. Last fall, the NRSC also leaked to *The Washington Times* an oppo-research document about Laffey's tenure as mayor undercutting his signature issue. Its title: "The Laffey Tax Machine."

Why is the GOP so adamant about stopping Laffey? Because Republicans know that, although Laffey can win a Republican primary, he almost certainly can't beat his Democratic challenger, Sheldon Whitehouse, in a general election. Polls show Whitehouse crushing Laffey by more than 20 points, whereas Chafee runs about even with Whitehouse. And this brings us to the critical difference between the anti-Lieberman and the anti-Chafee campaigns. In Connecticut, there has never been a real chance that Lieber-

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man's seat would fall into Republican hands. But a Club victory in Rhode Island would mean, as Moore puts it, "you're just handing the seat over to a Democrat." Toomey didn't respond to interview requests, but a statement at the Club's website calls the risk of Laffey losing in the general election overstated and "acceptable," adding that replacing Chafee with a Democrat "wouldn't be much of a loss ... as he would vote much the same."

But don't tell that to Republicans who know that the vote that *really* matters is the one for Senate majority leader next January that will decide party control of the chamber. They know that Democrats—thanks in part to George Allen's creative vocabulary—are now within striking range of winning the six seats they need to regain the Senate. "Their hair's on fire," says GOP lobbyist Scott Reed about Washington Republicans. "You have to give [the Club] credit—they scored out in Michigan. But we're talking about control of the U.S. Senate here." Democrats, however, don't mind it one bit. "If they succeed in their efforts against Chafee, they're going to save us a significant amount of money and time, because, in all likelihood, the seat won't be very competitive," says a Democratic Party strategist. "So, in some weird, twisted way, we're rooting for their success."

THOUGH IT MAY well help to facilitate a new Democratic Senate, for now the Club appears to pose little danger to the GOP's House majority. The Club has succeeded in boosting arch-conservatives—in Nebraska, Ohio, Colorado, and California—but, as in Michigan, Democrats are not competitive in those districts. Still, both parties are watching Idaho's First District, where the Club has spent more than $300,000 on behalf of State Representative Bill Sali. A Christian fundamentalist and home-schooler, Sali is widely known, even among Republicans, as an insufferable jerk. "A bully," according to one of his fellow conservative legislators. "Just an absolute idiot," the GOP state House speaker recently said. Mike Simpson, the sitting representative from the state's other congressional district, even threatened during one heated argument to throw Sali out a window. When Vice President Dick Cheney visited for a Sali fund-raiser, the scene was a like a birthday party for the class pariah; only three of Sali's 104 legislative colleagues showed. A group of anti-Sali Republican businessmen have gone so far as to endorse the Democrat in the race, apparently on the theory that it's better to sacrifice the seat to Democrats for two years than be stuck with a Republican they despise. Ordinarily, Democrats would consider an Idaho seat utterly hopeless. But, one party operative says, they're keeping an eye on the race, "only because [Sali]'s in it."

Still, Idaho being Idaho, chances are good that Sali will win. So, even if the Club for Growth succeeds in costing the Republican Party its Senate majority in Rhode Island, it can still take credit for one of the most obnoxious new additions to the House. Republicans can only hope that the crusading left turns out to be just as strategically brilliant. ■

Beirut Dispatch

Tour de Force

BY ANNIA CIEZADLO

WHO SAYS LEBANON'S tourism industry is dead? Come to Beirut these days and you can take a guided tour of Hell, with Hezbollah as your escort. Every day, the Party of God welcomes visitors to Haret Hreik, in the heart of the city's mostly Shia southern suburbs. Once home to Hezbollah's headquarters and Beirut's most densely populated neighborhood, Haret Hreik is now a smoking swath of wreckage. For the thousands of families who used to live here, the devastation is almost unimaginable. But, for Hezbollah, the ruins of this once-bustling neighborhood have become a tourist attraction—and an invaluable propaganda tool.

Hezbollah began offering tours of Haret Hreik during the war, assembling every morning at eleven o'clock. I went on the first of these excursions on July 20, along with the bulk of the international press corps—about 100 correspondents, from well-known TV anchors to grubby freelancers. Longtime Hezbollah spokesman Hussein Naboulsi showed up with his entourage and delivered a running patter of outrage. "On a daily basis, they come here and turn buildings into rubble, as you see," he shouted, in his frantic, high-pitched voice. "This is where we live! If the Israelis dare to confront us face to face, let them do it on the border, not come with jet fighters from high above in the sky, and just hit civilian targets!" He strode off into the wreckage, still shouting, and we scrambled to keep up.

Every once in a while, as we marched through the rubble, a man (never a woman) would pop out of a destroyed building to shout with carefully rehearsed rage. All of these appearances were orchestrated by Hezbollah for our benefit. Al Arabiya, a Saudi-funded satellite channel that many Lebanese view as U.S.-backed propaganda, even merited its own personal heckler. "Where is Al Arabiya?" demanded a short, angry man, flailing his arms in the middle of the street. "I have something to tell them." When a microphone with the station's logo appeared in front of him, he shouted, "The Saudis want this to happen! These missiles were made in USA, made in Saudi Arabia, made in Jordan, made in Egypt!"

A telling omission from this litany of oppressors was the country that had actually fired the missiles: Israel. (The Saudis don't make missiles, after all.) You can always rely on Hezbollah leaders for anti-Israel rhetoric. But, ever since

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the war ended, they've been less fixated than usual on their neighbor to the south. Instead, they're cultivating hatred for a larger, more world-historic enemy: the United States. By focusing on the Great Satan, Hezbollah can avoid the delicate subject of who, exactly, started this particular war—and promote itself instead as a defender of the Muslim world against U.S. aggression and the West generally.

TODAY, THE SEA of mangled concrete that was once Haret Hreik is a surreal fairground, complete with souvenir stands and parades. Backhoes and cranes are busily clearing the roads, dumping detritus onto the mountains of rubble that mark where buildings used to be. Hezbollah has adorned most of these mounds with giant, red-and-white banners bearing English-language slogans like NEW MIDDLE BEAST, THE DIVINE VICTORY, and MADE IN USA (below which, in smaller letters, it says TRADEMARK). Of the hundreds of signs in the shattered neighborhood, only a few mention Israel.

Now that the war is over, Haret Hreik is a popular day trip. If Hezbollah's wartime press tours were all about obtaining sympathy from the outside world, the current carnival is about stoking domestic outrage. As the United States wades back into Lebanon, promising $230 million in aid, Hezbollah offers Haret Hreik up as a graphic reminder of how the United States helped destroy their country—and of how Hezbollah is rebuilding it. Hundreds of Lebanese walk through the rubble, some with cameras and video recorders, many of them families with kids. Most have come to inspect the ruins of their homes and businesses. Others, including a few Christian families, are simply here to sightsee.

The main attraction is the headquarters of Al Manar, Hezbollah's satellite TV station. To get to it, you pass through a little tent Hezbollah has set up, with flyers directing people to eight registration centers where the party will reimburse them for their lost homes and possessions. There's even a bouquet of flowers on a little table. Outside the tent, dozens of sightseers—all Lebanese, many wearing dust masks—press up against a metal railing, pointing and taking pictures. The mood is weirdly festive, with some people holding up their children and others snapping photos with the latest cell phones. Between the souvenir stands, the dust masks, the earth-moving equipment, and the solemn air of commemoration, it's a bit like Ground Zero in the year after September 11. The smell is the same, too: chalky and toxic, utterly inescapable. It's the smell of the insides of things—pulverized concrete, plaster, asbestos, burnt plastic, cordite, and acrid chemicals. A few veiled women hold headscarves over their mouths to keep out the dust.

The spot where Al Manar used to be is a mountain of charred cement, topped with the remains of people's lives: children's books, pillows, pieces of chairs, an ancient manual typewriter. The apartment buildings from which all this flotsam fell loom above the rubble, ringing the site of the station. Some were destroyed, but others only had their outer walls sheared away so that you can see into the individual apartments: In one, a TV set totters on the edge of the void, its back facing what used to be a wall; in another, an old lady fills a plastic can with oil.

Jutting rakishly from the wreckage, a billboard-sized banner touts the staying power of Hezbollah's radio station—which, like Al Manar, never went off the air despite numerous Israeli bombings of its offices and transmitters. AL NOUR RADIO, it proclaims, A VOICE STRONGER THAN THE AGGRESSOR. "We've been broadcasting live from here all day, from ten in the morning until three," says Ahmed Naeem, the Hezbollah functionary in charge, with pride. "We had everyone! NGOs, ambassadors, even the Turkish foreign minister." According to Naeem, Abdullah Gul, the foreign minister, said the damage was worse than that from the Turkish earthquake of 1999.

"We prepared for this," explains Naeem. "We never kept a lot of people in the main building, even before the soldiers were kidnapped. We were always prepared for attack without provocation. We have a couple of different studios, and we evacuated all of them."

A handful of middle-age men in spotless suits clamber up the mountain: It's the Beirut Chamber of Commerce, coming for a photo-op. Two days later, Lebanese Prime Minister Fouad Siniora would visit the bomb site as well. Standing in the ruins, flanked by Shia politicians, he denounced Israel's "barbaric acts against Lebanon." As usual, Siniora was in a tight political spot: As a member of the U.S.-backed Future bloc in parliament, he couldn't very well criticize the United States.

CURIOUS TO SEE where all the colorful bunting comes from, I go in search of Hezbollah's graphics unit. I find the army of artists relaxing under a tent, sitting in plastic chairs, while a team of young men pass out posters. These are the guys in charge of the banners and signs that hang everywhere. They've also designed the bright-red trucker hats that many Hezbollah employees are wearing. In Arabic script, the hats declare: NASR MIN ALLAH—literally, "Victory from God," but also a play on the name of Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah. They've been cranking out the Hezbollabilia the whole time, even while the bombs were falling, preparing for their divine victory ever since the war began.

"The slogans—we've been getting them from the war itself," says Ghassan Darwish, one of the graphic designers. "They're the slogans that the Americans and Israelis are using." In his hands, for example, Condoleezza Rice's "New Middle East" becomes the NEW MIDDLE BEAST, with the word BEAST splattered across the poster like blood. I ask Darwish why so many of the signs are in English. "It's normal for them to be in several different languages, because there are foreign journalists here, asking questions," he replies.

I ask him how people are reacting to the giant signs. "People knew during the war that these were American bombs falling on us, in Israeli hands," he says. "People were receptive to it—especially MADE IN USA." ■

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Camus does Bush.

Strangerer

BY LEE SIEGEL

"He found it an interesting book and a quick read." —White House Press Secretary Tony Snow on President Bush's recent absorption in Albert Camus's The Stranger.

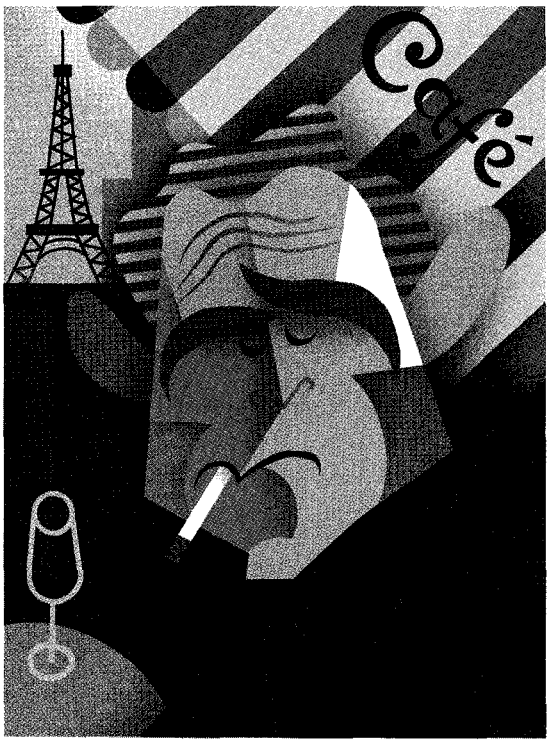
MOM PASSED AWAY today. Or yesterday maybe. I don't know. Saw it on CNN. I had the sound off on the TV, and when they showed Mom's picture, I thought it was Lauren Bacall. Made me sad. Loved her in *To Have and Have More*. Got on the horn to Rove and said, "Lauren Bacall died." All of a sudden, alarms went off. The Secret Service ran into my bedroom. I shouted "Pillow fight!" but this was for real. I could hear the jets buzzing in the sky. Turned out that "Lauren Bacall died" was code for "We're under attack." No one told me they changed the damn code. Thought it was still "every cloud has a silver lining."

Mom dead. It was hard to believe. Just hate bad news like that. Damn liberal media stick it in your face. Had Bolten check it out on Fox News to be absolutely sure. He reported back and said, "Chief, do you remember what happened to Spot, when he stopped barking, forever? We have a similar situation here." Good hire, El Bolto. Funny, I didn't feel anything one way or another once I knew it was true. Only spoke with Mom once in my life. I was five. I said, "I'm frightened." She said, "That's impossible." Never heard from her again. I told The Bolten, "Saddle up. Let's fly down to Crawford and bury Spot." "Mom," said Bolten. I said: "You call me 'Chief,' or 'Mr. President,' or 'Boss,' you little shit-bag." He turned red and said, "I mean, bury Mom, Mr. President." Got him. I couldn't stop laughing.

Up in the sky, in Air Force One. Everything on the ground got smaller as we went higher. Made me think. Love that. Rove sitting down a ways. Bolten up here. No reporters. Cheney on the other side there. Secret Service, Marines. One of the Secret Service guys was Muslim. Ali something. I said, "Do you mind if I call you 'Chaim'? I have trouble remembering 'Ali.' " Cracked everyone up. He said it was fine. Great guy. Incredible that some of these people are self-exploders. Once saw a Saudi prince fart so hard he blew himself off his chaise lounge and into the pool. Whole different ballgame with the royal family. Great hosts. Great entertainers. Cheney asked Ali if he could look at his gun. Loves guns, that Cheney. Loves to hunt. Last Thanksgiving he actually brought down a flock of turkeys with a shoulder-to-air missile. Powerful men need hobbies. Dad used to collect famous thank-you notes. Had one from a Roman emperor. LaGuardia, I think.

There was a commotion in the cabin. Old Cheney had mistakenly shot Ali in the foot. Ali grimaced but waved his hand, saying, "It's nothing. Not your fault." Then he limped off to the bathroom. If only the whole damn region was like that. I had the Doc go and fix him. The Big C came over. He lowered his head and spoke in a whisper. The Cheney cracks me up. "I'm fucked," he said. "Shooting Arabs for sport. On the presidential plane. That's what they'll say. Completely fucked." He put Ali's gun down on the table and pushed it away. "Hair-triggers are for wimps and people weakened by allergies," he said. He gave that crooked little half-smile of his that would have made me worry, if I was a man who didn't have a destiny and I knew how to worry. "No reporters, no problemo," I told him. "Easy for you to say," Cheney said. Actually it wasn't. I had trouble pronouncing "problemo."

I was glad I wasn't in The Big C's shoes. I was glad I was in the shoes of a man whose Mom just died and who would get a brief honeymoon with the press. But what if I was in El Cheney's shoes? What if it was me instead of Cheney who'd shot that Arab? What if it was Lauren Bacall and not Spot who'd died? What if everything that happened could just as easily happen another way? In that case, I could be in anybody's shoes. But no matter whose shoes I'd be in, I would still be wearing my socks. That makes all the difference. And things would still happen the way I want them to happen. The idea that nothing made sense was absurd. Ali came out of the bathroom and sat down across from me. Suddenly, the sun was in my eyes. Something flashed at me, like metal. A knife. I picked Ali's gun up off the table and squeezed off four shots. The president in his socks. Makes things happen. Without fear. Told Bolten to write up a mental reminder for me. Have to send a thank-you note to Mom. ■



DAVID COWLES

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Kashmir on the Thames.

London Broil

BY PETER BERGEN AND PAUL CRUICKSHANK

LONDON, ENGLAND

ON NEW YEAR'S EVE in 1999, Islamist militants had plenty to celebrate. At the Taliban-controlled Kandahar airport, a planeload of hostages was being swapped for terrorists held in India. The hijackers—Kashmiri militants—had managed to secure the freedom of three key allies. Two, Maulana Masood Azhar and Mushtaq Ahmed Zargar, were Pakistani; but the third, a man named Omar Sheikh, was the scion of a wealthy British Pakistani family and had studied at the London School of Economics.

That a British citizen figured so prominently in the Kandahar hostage crisis was disturbing but far from anomalous. The eleven people charged this week with conspiring to blow up planes using liquid explosives are all British citizens. So were the terrorists who attacked London in 2005, almost all of the plotters who allegedly conspired to detonate a fertilizer bomb in England in 2004, the suicide bombers who attacked a beachfront Tel Aviv bar in 2003, and an alleged Al Qaeda operative who, along with would-be shoe bomber Richard Reid, planned to explode a plane in the fall of 2001.

Besides holding British citizenship, most had one other thing in common with Omar Sheikh: They were of Pakistani descent. For terrorist organizations like Al Qaeda—which, in the years since American troops deposed the Taliban, has reconstituted itself in Pakistan—ethnic Pakistanis living in the United Kingdom make perfect recruits, since they speak English and can travel on British passports. Indeed, in the wake of this month's high-profile arrests, it can now be argued that the biggest threat to U.S. security emanates not from Iran or Iraq or Afghanistan—but rather from Great Britain, our closest ally.

ANECDOTAL EVIDENCE FOR the influence of Muslim extremism on British Pakistani communities is not hard to come by. We visited the Al Badr Health & Fitness Centre in East London on a balmy June night to hear Abu Muwaheed—a leader of the Saviour Sect, an Islamist group—discuss who was to blame for the 2005 London bombings. His answer? Just about everyone but the bombers themselves—the British government, the British public, even moderate Muslims who betrayed their co-religionists by cooperating with the government. The evening included a video montage of fighting in Iraq that ended with footage of Osama bin Laden calling for jihad. One Pakistani man attending the session told us he considered the lead suicide bomber in the London attacks to be "a glorious martyr." Two months later, five of the Fitness Centre's regulars would be among those arrested in connection with the plot to bomb transatlantic flights.

How did Al Qaeda's militant worldview become so popular among a subset of British Pakistanis? For one thing, there is the generational divide in the community. Just as in Turgenev's *Fathers and Sons*—which depicts the rift between an older generation of nineteenth-century Russian liberals and their more militant, socialist sons—some of Great Britain's young Pakistanis are filled with contempt both for the moderation of their parents and for a British society that won't quite accept them. For many, this leaves a vacuum in their identities that radical Islamist preachers have been all too glad to fill. Now, young disciples of those preachers—Abu Muwaheed, for instance—have come into their own, and they are often even more radical than their mentors. Add to this the fact that one-quarter of young British Pakistanis are unemployed, and you have a population that is especially vulnerable to the temptations of radicalism.

Still, homegrown militancy can only partly account for the problem. That's because it is primarily in Pakistan—not the United Kingdom—where British citizens are being recruited into Al Qaeda and other terrorist groups. About 400,000 British Pakistanis per year travel back to their homeland, where a small percentage embark on learning the skills necessary to become effective terrorists. Several of the British citizens recently suspected of plotting to blow up airliners reportedly went to Pakistan to meet Al Qaeda operatives. According to a government report released this year, British officials believe that the lead perpetrators of the 2005 attacks in London—Mohammed Siddique Khan and Shehzad Tanweer—met with Al Qaeda members in Pakistan. Several individuals allegedly involved in a 2004 plot to explode a fertilizer bomb in Great Britain also spent significant time in Pakistan. In April 2003, Omar Khan Sharif, whose family immigrated to Great Britain from Kashmir, attempted to carry out a suicide attack in a bar in Tel Aviv after visiting Pakistan. In 2001, according to British prosecutors, he e-mailed his wife from there, writing, "We will definitely, *inshallah*, meet soon, if not in this life then the next." And, in the fall of 2001, Sajit Badat plotted to explode a transatlantic airliner with a shoe bomb shortly after spending time in a Pakistani training camp.

But how to explain the lure of militancy for those who travel to Pakistan to become terrorists? The answer, in many cases, is Kashmir. A disproportionate number of Pakistanis living in Great Britain trace their lineage back to Kashmir. Though conventional wisdom holds that anger toward U.S. foreign policy is most responsible for creating new terrorists, among British Pakistanis, Kashmir is proba-

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bly just as important. What's more, for the small number of British Pakistanis who want terrorist training, the facilities of Kashmiri militant groups have become an obvious first choice—as well as a gateway to Al Qaeda itself.

Al Qaeda's ties with Kashmiri militant groups date to the Afghan war against the Soviets, when bin Laden's forces fought alongside Pakistani groups like Lashkar-e-Toiba (LeT). After the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan, many of those groups turned their attention to Kashmir—the key reason why the Kashmiri conflict re-erupted in the 1990s. These ties endured throughout the decade and grew closer after Al Qaeda left Sudan and settled in Afghanistan in 1996. President Clinton's August 1998 cruise-missile strike against an Al Qaeda base in eastern Afghanistan killed a number of members of Harakat Ul Mujihadeen, one of the largest Kashmiri militant groups—suggesting that it was sharing training facilities with Al Qaeda.

Since September 11, the relationship between Al Qaeda and Kashmiri groups has only deepened, as demonstrated by the fact that Al Qaeda operative Abu Zubaydah was arrested in an LeT safehouse in Pakistan in 2002. Al Qaeda has been able to regroup in Pakistan after losing its base in Afghanistan in part by cooperating with Kashmiri militants. A senior American military intelligence official told us that there is "no difference" between Al Qaeda and Kashmiri terrorist organizations. Al Qaeda has also attempted to fit the Kashmir dispute into its anti-American narrative: Hamid Mir, a Pakistani journalist who is writing bin Laden's authorized biography, told us that Al Qaeda propaganda accuses Pakistan's government of selling out Kashmir under pressure from George Bush and Tony Blair.

The danger to the United States of the nexus between British Pakistanis, Al Qaeda, and Kashmir is becoming clear. One of the alleged ringleaders of the recently exposed plot to blow up transatlantic flights is Rashid Rauf, a Pakistan-born British citizen whose family immigrated to Great Britain from Kashmir. According to the Associated Press, Rauf is married to a sister-in-law of Maulana Masood Azhar, the leader of the Kashmiri terrorist group Jaish-e-Mohammed (and one of the men released as part of the deal that ended the Kandahar hostage standoff in 1999). Previously, in 2004, British authorities had charged eight men—many of Pakistani descent—with planning terrorism, including a plot to blow up the New York Stock Exchange. The cell's alleged leader, Abu Issa Al Hindi, a British convert to Islam, wrote a book explaining how he was radicalized by his experience fighting in Kashmir. In March 2006, British citizen Mohammed Ajmal Khan was sentenced to nine years for fund-raising on behalf of terrorism in Pakistan and Afghanistan. Khan admitted attending a terrorist training camp run by LeT. The judge in Khan's case described him as "a terrorist quartermaster" for LeT. According to *The Daily Telegraph*, he was a frequent visitor to the United States and talked about attacking U.S. synagogues. American prosecutors say Khan was in touch with a group of Virginia militants also tied to LeT.

ALL OF THIS should raise two concerns for American officials. The first is that American Pakistanis could pose a similar threat. "Homegrown terrorists may prove to be as dangerous as groups like Al Qaeda, if not more so," FBI Director Robert Mueller warned in June. There are reasons to worry that he is right. Two and a half months ago, an FBI affidavit contends, Syed Haris Ahmed, an American citizen of Pakistani descent, traveled from Atlanta to Ontario to meet with a terrorist cell. The FBI alleges that Ahmed, now in U.S. custody, planned to attend a terrorist training camp in Pakistan. In 2003, Iyman Faris, an American citizen born in Kashmir, pleaded guilty to helping Al Qaeda plan attacks in the United States. Faris admitted to meeting Khalid Sheikh Mohammed—the mastermind of the September 11 attacks—in Pakistan to plan those operations in 2002.

Yet it seems unlikely that radicalism in the American Pakistani community could pose as large a threat as radicalism in the British Pakistani community. American Muslims are, on average, more politically moderate than their British counterparts. According to a 2001 survey, 70 percent of American Muslims strongly agreed that they should participate in U.S. institutions. By contrast, a recent Pew poll found that 81 percent of British Muslims considered themselves Muslims first and British citizens second.

Of more concern, then, is the likelihood that British Pakistanis will continue to target Americans—both in the United States and abroad. To address this problem, the Bush administration should encourage the British government to monitor more closely the activities of U.K.-based extremist groups. Simply banning these organizations is not enough. Weeks after we attended one of their meetings, the Saviour Sect was outlawed by British Home Secretary John Reid. But, when we spoke to one of the organization's leaders, Anjem Choudhary, by phone, he told us, "Of course we don't use that name anymore. We just hold our meetings under another name." In addition, Great Britain must step up efforts to identify its own citizens who attend Kashmiri or Al Qaeda training camps in Pakistan.

Unfortunately, there are limits to what the British government can do alone. It will need help from moderate Muslims, some of whom are waking up to the threat posed by the radicals in their midst. "These people are ill," says Ghulam Rabbani, the imam of the mosque adjoining the Fitness Centre, where the Saviour Sect held meetings. "I say very categorically and very clearly that they are misguided and they don't know the basics of Islam."

Rabbani faces a steep challenge: According to a recent poll, a full quarter of British Muslims consider the 2005 London bombings justified. And anyone who doubts how dangerous the intersection of such sentiments, Al Qaeda, and Kashmiri militants can be should consider what became of Omar Sheikh, the former London School of Economics student who won his freedom on New Year's Eve in 1999: Two years later, he was under arrest for orchestrating the murder of *Wall Street Journal* reporter Daniel Pearl. ■

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The revolt against the NRA.

Gun Crazy

BY MICHAEL BLANDING

LAKE CHARLES, LOUISIANA

GUNS FILL THE carpeted hallway of the event center at the L'Auberge du Lac Hotel & Casino here, at the Outdoor Writers Association of America's (OWAA) seventy-ninth annual conference. On a folding table sit a half-dozen Browning rifles, engraved and gleaming on a white tablecloth. Next to it, a table sponsored by Smith & Wesson holds enough handguns to drop a mammoth, including James Bond's Walther PPK, Dirty Harry's .44 Magnum, and the even larger .500 Magnum, which weighs four and a half pounds, sports an eight-and-three-eighths-inch barrel, and reigns as the most powerful handgun in the world.

For all the firepower, however, the gun drawing the biggest crowd of hunters, sport-shooters, and outdoors writers on this rainy spring morning is a beat-up Winchester shotgun with electrical tape around the muzzle. "It kicks like a bastard," admits Austin Dorr, the gun's owner, who nevertheless used it to break the world record in trap shooting in 1967—taking down 995 out of 1,000 clay pigeons. "I didn't even realize it at the time," he coolly recounts to a crowd of onlookers. "I knew I broke a lot of targets. But I just got in my truck and went home."

With salt-and-pepper hair under a Yankees cap and the odor of cigarettes on his breath, Dorr is a local celebrity at this conference, which skews heavily toward the hook-and-bullet crowd. The 79-year-old Korean war vet and lifelong Republican still drives his pickup to New Hampshire every year on the first day of deer-hunting season. "Nobody will ever take my gun," he says. "If they do, I'll be stretched out, and they can grab it." Despite the tough talk, however, Dorr is no friend to the National Rifle Association (NRA), which has asked him to join many times. Get him going, and he'll tell you that the gun-lobbying group has lost its way with too extreme a focus on protecting the Second Amendment. "It's not concentrating enough on things that matter to me," he says, "like conservation."

In fact, Dorr is here at the conference as chair of a new organization called the American Hunters and Shooters Association (AHSA), which bills itself as a more "moderate alternative to the NRA." The group has tapped into a small but growing minority of hunters and sportsmen who feel disgruntled with the NRA's support of conservative lawmakers who, they say, vote against their best interests. Judging from the reception at the conference, there are more Dorrs out there than one might expect. This growing rift among hunters represents perhaps the best opening in years for liberals and moderates to blunt the effects of the gun lobby on the national level.

Michael Blanding is a Boston-based magazine writer.

FOR DECADES, THE NRA has used its power to rule by fiat in Southern and Western states, which are filled with constituents who might vote for Democrats except for fear that the national Democratic Party wants to take away their guns. In the 1994 midterm elections, it helped swing race after race to conservative Republicans. A decade later, it succeeded in painting John Kerry as an anti-gun zealot, contributing to his loss in crucial states like New Mexico, Nevada, and Iowa. Over the years, however, the NRA may have overplayed its hand in its increasingly hard-line stance against gun control.

The NRA's tack to the right started with the so-called "Cincinnati Revolt" of 1977, in which a vocal wing of NRA members broke with the organization's stance on banning so-called Saturday Night Specials—small, easily concealed handguns. Since then, the NRA has systematically challenged any legislation that smacks of gun registration, and it has pushed for unfettered access to all types of guns and ammunition. One of the casualties was Jim Smith, an NRA board member during the 1980s who headed the group's hunting and wildlife committee and is now editor of *Muskie Magazine*, an angler's publication in Arizona. Smith says his insistence on endorsing candidates who supported strong wilderness protection—though not necessarily gun access—caused friction on the board and led to his ouster. "I was told this is a single-purpose organization," he says between sessions at the OWAA conference.

Increasingly, however, hunters are viewing environmental issues as part of their own cause. "What good are the guns if we have nowhere left to hunt—if there's no more habitat?" asks Dave Stalling, Western field coordinator of Trout Unlimited and former president of the Montana Wildlife Foundation, pulling on a bottle of beer in a hospitality suite at the conference after hours. A hunter of big-game species like elk and mule deer, Stalling has worked to protect wilderness lands in Montana, Colorado, and New Mexico. Though he has tried to enlist the NRA in his effort, so far he has received no word from the organization. Indeed, many of the pro-gun politicians who receive the NRA's "A" rating, including California Representative Richard Pombo and Alaska Senator Ted Stevens, have been among the most aggressive in opening up public lands to extractive industries. And members of Congress like Senator Larry Craig, who has been actively pushing logging in Idaho forests, and Representative Don Young, a proponent of drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, are on the NRA's board.

NRA spokesman Andrew Arulanandam defends the NRA's push for more roads into public wilderness areas. "Most hunters don't have the luxury to take two weeks off to trek across wilderness areas to hunt," he says in a telephone

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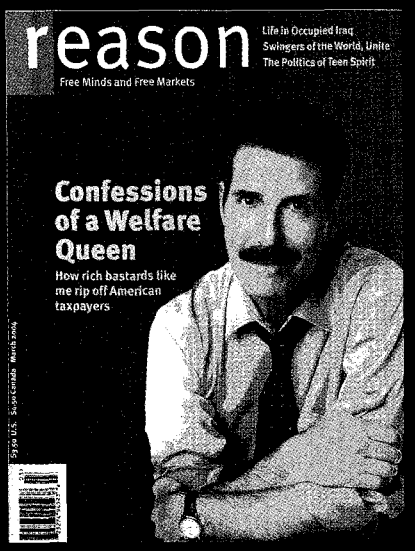
"My definition of a free society is a society where it is safe to be unpopular."

— Adlai Stevenson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interview. "We believe there needs to be habitat preservation and make sure there are animals to hunt. However, that needs to be balanced with the needs and interests of hunters for access." But that sentiment seems to be at odds with the majority of hunters. In the latest hunting survey in *Field & Stream* magazine, 41 percent of respondents felt that "shrinking wildlife habitat" was the number-one threat to hunting—compared with just 25 percent who named "anti-gun legislation." Two-thirds of respondents, in fact, supported an increase in taxes to acquire public lands—unheard of, given the notorious anti-tax sentiment of the libertarian West.

The poll also revealed a more moderate stance on gun control, with two-thirds supporting background checks for gun sales and opposing the use of assault weapons for hunting. Some hunters might even welcome restrictions as a way to improve the image of gun owners. "If the police say we should ban Tech-9s and cop-killer bullets, that's good enough for me," says James Williams, a software product manager from Atlanta who owns five guns and hunts several times per season. By not supporting these positions, says Williams, the NRA hurts the image of gun owners. "There should be more outreach to non–gun owners to show that, just because someone owns a gun, they are not crazy," he says.

Views like these have emboldened opponents of the NRA, such as the leaders of the AHSA. "The NRA is worrying about law enforcement taking away your guns. At the same time, you look at what is happening with conservation," said Executive Director Bob Ricker at a press conference announcing the new group at OWAA's April gathering. "We think it's a bait and switch." A former NRA general counsel and lobbyist for the firearms industry, Ricker says there's room for a group who stands up for hunters' Second Amendment rights while still supporting "common sense restrictions"—for example, restoring the federal ban on military-style assault weapons. Already, the group has raised $600,000 toward its goal of $1.2 million to weigh in on elections.

The AHSA isn't the only one looking to capitalize on the discontent among hunters and sportsmen. Some candidates for races in November are already staking out moderate gun control positions, taking heart from the recent governor's election in Virginia in 2005, in which conservative Democrat Tim Kaine—who resisted calls to roll back Virginia's landmark legislation to limit gun sales to one per month—beat NRA-endorsed candidate Jerry Kilgore despite repeated attacks by the gun lobby. A similar test case is the close Senate race in Missouri between right-wing incumbent Jim Talent and centrist Democrat Claire McCaskill, a former prosecutor who has staked out a middle ground on gun rights. Most election-watchers are betting the race will hinge on discontent over Talent's strong opposition to stem-cell research, which shows how little the gun issue may factor.

Democratic leaders, meanwhile, seem to be making room under the tent for gun owners. Party Chairman Howard Dean has declared a policy of leaving gun control up to states, with Democratic leaders New Mexico Governor Bill Richardson and Senate Minority Leader Harry Reid of Nevada publicly professing their stance against restrictions on gun ownership.

BUT, THESE INVITING gestures aside, winning over gun owners from the NRA might not be that easy. The AHSA, after all, almost didn't make it to the conference here. A week before the event, the group's attendance was nearly scuttled when some OWAA members threatened to resign if the AHSA was allowed to join. At an emotional board meeting a few days later, an eleventh-hour compromise was worked out in which the group would be allowed to participate. Still, many conference participants seemed skeptical of the new group. Jack Ballard, a slow-talking Montanan who hunts big game like elk, deer, and mountain goat, says he's worried about the policies that AHSA professes, such as mandatory child-safety locks and background checks in private transactions. "If this organization is seen as one willing to compromise around the edges of the Second Amendment, then I don't think they have a future," he says.

The AHSA has already been attacked as a front group for the Democratic Party and demonized on pro-gun blogs as "the enemy in camouflage." It's an easy charge to make: The group's president, Ray Schoenke, was once a Democratic candidate for Maryland governor, and the group's nonprofit foundation president, John Rosenthal, is a Boston real estate developer who served a stint on the board of the Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence. Rosenthal insists he has been wrongly painted as someone who wants to ban guns, pointing out that he owns two shotguns himself and quit the board of the Brady Campaign in 2004 over its extreme gun-control stance. "There's been a one-sided discussion: You are either for banning guns or unlimited access," says Rosenthal. "You could prevent the majority of gun deaths with relatively simple solutions to keep guns out of the hands of kids and criminals."

If the AHSA can overcome its image problems, it will have a rich field to draw from—according to research the organization commissioned, 44 percent of gun owners think the NRA is "too extreme in their political views." And, while the NRA has four million members, estimates on the number of gun owners in the United States range upward from 20 million. "Even if we just get 5 percent," says Schoenke, "that's one million."

It's too early to say whether those hunters and shooters who see more gray in the Second Amendment will gain enough ground to make a difference politically. As wedge issues go, however, guns lack the religious intractability of gay marriage and abortion. If enough hunters like Dorr are able to stake out a middle ground on conservation and gun control, then they could dramatically reshape election politics in the West. "The NRA is powerful, but they are not all-powerful," says Pat Wray, a Wisconsin bird-hunter and popular outdoor columnist. "I get hundreds of letters from people who have quit the NRA or who, like me, are in the NRA but looking for something different. All of those gun owners are ripe for the picking." ■

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A scientist's plea for Christian environmentalism.

Apocalypse Now

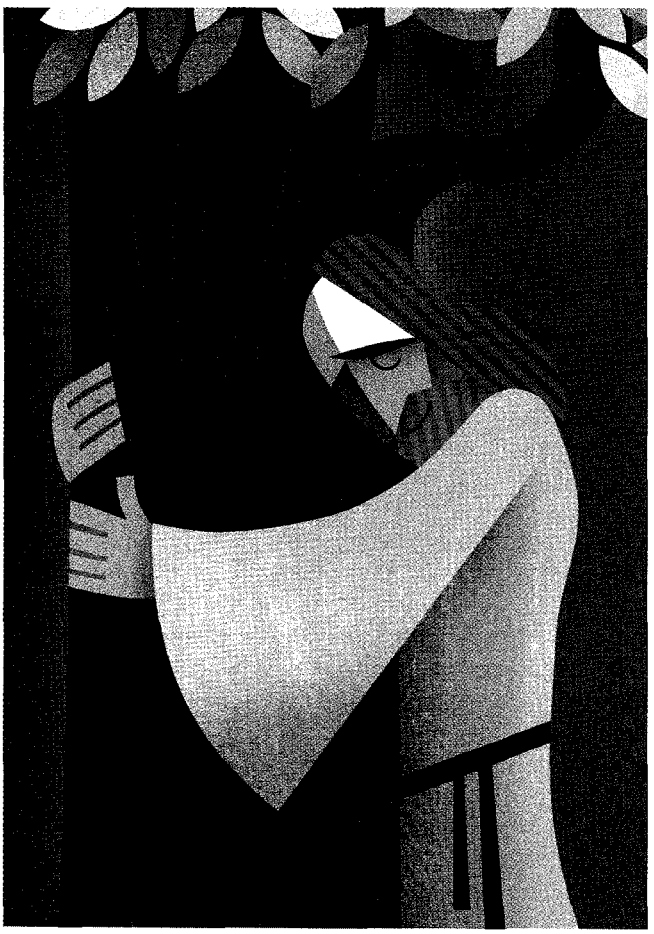
BY EDWARD O. WILSON

The following is a letter from the eminent Harvard biologist Edward O. Wilson, winner of the National Medal of Science and two Pulitzer Prizes, to an imagined Southern Baptist pastor—and the larger evangelical community.

DEAR PASTOR,

We have not met, yet I feel I know you well enough to call you a friend. First of all, we grew up in the same faith. As a boy, I, too, answered the altar call; I went under the water. Although I no longer belong to that faith, I am confident that, if we met and spoke privately of our deepest beliefs, it would be in a spirit of mutual respect and goodwill. I know we share many precepts of moral behavior. Perhaps it also matters that we are both Americans and, insofar as it might still affect civility and good manners, we are both Southerners.

I write to you now for your counsel and help. Of course, in doing so, I see no way to avoid the fundamental differences in our worldviews. You are a strict interpreter of Christian Holy Scripture; I am a secular humanist. You believe that each person's soul is immortal, making this planet a waystation to a second, eternal life; I think heaven and hell are what we create for ourselves, on this planet. For you, the belief in God made flesh to save mankind; for me, the belief in Promethean fire seized to set men free. You have found your final truth; I am still searching. You may be wrong; I may be wrong. We both may be partly right.



DAVID COWLES

Do these differences in worldview separate us in all things? They do not. You and I and every other human being strive for the same imperatives of security, freedom of choice, personal dignity, and a cause to believe in that is larger than ourselves. Let us see, then, if we can meet on the near side of metaphysics in order to deal with the real world we share. You have the power to help solve a great problem about which I care deeply. I hope you have the same concern. I suggest that we set aside our differences in order to save the Creation. The defense of living nature is a universal value. It doesn't rise from, nor does it promote, any religious or ideological dogma. Rather, it serves without discrimination the interests of all humanity. Pastor, we need your help. The Creation—living nature—is in deep trouble.

SCIENTISTS ESTIMATE THAT, if habitat-conversion and other destructive human activities continue at their present rates, half the species of plants and animals on earth could be either gone or at least fated for early extinction by the end of the century. The ongoing extinction rate is calculated in the most conservative estimates to be about 100 times above that prevailing before humans appeared on earth, and it is expected to rise to at least 1,000 times greater (or more) in the next few decades. If this rise continues unabated, the cost to humanity—in wealth, environmental security, and quality of life—will be catastrophic.

Surely we can agree that each species, however inconspicuous and humble it may seem to us at this moment, is a masterpiece of biology and well worth saving. Each species possesses a unique combination of genetic traits that fits it more or less precisely to a particular part of the environment. Prudence alone dictates that we act quickly to pre-

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Edward O. Wilson is the Pellegrino university professor emeritus at Harvard University. This article is adapted from his forthcoming book, THE CREATION: AN APPEAL TO SAVE LIFE ON EARTH.

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vent the extinction of species and, with it, the pauperization of earth's ecosystems.

With all the troubles that humanity faces, why should we care about the condition of living nature? Homo sapiens is a species confined to an extremely small niche. True, our minds soar out to the edges of the universe and contract inward to subatomic particles—the two extremes encompassing 30 powers of ten in space. In this respect, our intellects are godlike. But, let's face it, our bodies stay trapped inside a proportionately microscopic envelope of physical constraints. Earth provides a self-regulating bubble that sustains us indefinitely without any thought or contrivance of our own. This protective shield is the biosphere, the totality of life, creator of all air, cleanser of all water, manager of all soil—but is itself a fragile membrane that barely clings to the face of the planet. We depend upon its razor-thin health for every moment of our lives. We belong in the biosphere, we were born here as species, we are closely suited to its exacting conditions—and not all conditions, either, but just those in a few of the climatic regimes that exist upon some of the land. Environmental damage can be defined as any change that alters our surroundings in a direction contrary to humanity's inborn physical and emotional needs. We must be careful with the environment upon which our lives ultimately depend.

In destroying the biosphere, we are destroying unimaginably vast sources of scientific information and biological wealth. Opportunity costs, which will be better understood by our descendants than by ourselves, will be staggering. Gone forever will be undiscovered medicines, crops, timber, fibers, soil-restoring vegetation, petroleum substitutes, and other products and amenities. Critics of environmentalism forget, if they ever knew, how the rosy periwinkle of Madagascar provided the alkaloids that cure most cases of Hodgkin's disease and acute childhood leukemia; how a substance from an obscure Norwegian fungus made possible the organ transplant industry; how a chemical from the saliva of leeches yielded a solvent that prevents blood clots during and after surgery; and so on through the pharmacopoeia that has stretched from the herbal medicines of Stone Age shamans to the magic-bullet cures of present-day biomedical science.

These are just a few examples of what could be lost if Homo sapiens pursue our current course of environmental destruction. Earth is a laboratory wherein nature—God, if you prefer, pastor—has laid before us the results of countless experiments. We damage her at our own peril.

YOU MAY WELL ask at this point, *Why me?* Simply because religion and science are the two most powerful forces in the world today, and especially in the United States. If religion and science could be united on the common ground of biological conservation, the problem might soon be solved.

It may seem far-fetched for a secular scientist to propose an alliance between science and religion. But the fact is that environmental activists cannot succeed without you and your followers as allies. The political process in American democracy, with rare exceptions, does not start at the top and work its way down to the voting masses. It proceeds in the opposite direction. Political leaders are compelled to calculate as precisely as they can what it will take to win the next election. The United States is an intensely religious nation. It is overwhelmingly Judeo-Christian, with a powerful undercurrent of evangelism. We secularists must face reality. The National Association of Evangelicals has 30 million members; the three leading American humanist organizations combined have, at best, a few thousand. Those who, for religious reasons, believe in saving the Creation, have the strength to do so through the political process; acting alone, secular environmentalists do not. An alliance between science and religion, forged in an atmosphere of mutual respect, may be the only way to protect life on earth, including, in the end, our own.

YES, THE GULF separating our worldviews is wide. The Abrahamic religions—Judaism, Christianity, and Islam—believe that the universe was constructed to be relevant to humanity. The discoveries of science, in unintended opposition, have reduced earth to an infinitesimal speck within an immensity of space unrelated to human destiny. The Abrahamic religions envisage a supreme ruler who, while existing outside the material universe, nevertheless oversees an agenda for each and every one of our immortal souls. Science can find no evidence of an agenda other than that fashioned by the complex interaction of genes and environment within parallel evolving cultures. Religious creation stories have a divinely engineered beginning and a divinely ordained ending. According to science, in contrast, humans descended from apish ancestors; our origin was basically no different from that of other animals, played out over geological time through a tortuous route of mutation and environmentally driven natural selection. In addition, all mainstream religious belief, whether fundamentalist or liberal, is predicated upon the assumption that humanity is not alone, and we are here for a life and purpose beyond our earthly existence. Science says that, as far as verifiable evidence tells, we are alone, and what significance we have is therefore of our own making. This is the heart of the agonizing conflict between science and religion that has persisted for the past 500 years.

I do not see how the difference in worldview between these two great productions of human striving can be closed. But, for the purposes of saving the Creation, I am not sure that it needs to be. To make the point in good gospel manner, let me tell the story of a young man, newly trained for the ministry and so fixed in his Christian faith that he referred all questions of morality to readings from the Bible. When he visited the Atlantic rainforest of Brazil, he saw the manifest hand of God, and in his notebook he wrote, "It is not possible to give an adequate idea of the higher feelings of wonder, admiration, and devotion which fill and elevate

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the mind." That was Charles Darwin in 1832, early into the voyage of the HMS *Beagle*, before he had given any thought to evolution. And here is Darwin, concluding *On the Origin of Species* in 1859, having first abandoned Christian dogma and then, with his newfound intellectual freedom, formulated the theory of evolution by natural selection: "There is grandeur in this view of life, with its several powers, having been originally breathed into a few forms or into one; and that, whilst this planet has gone cycling on according to the fixed law of gravity, from so simple a beginning endless forms most beautiful and most wonderful have been, and are being, evolved." Darwin's reverence for life remained the same as he crossed the seismic divide that separated his religious phase and his scientific one. And so it can be for the divide that, today, separates mainstream religion and scientific humanism. And that separates you and me.

INDEED, DESPITE ALL that divides science from religion, there is good reason to hope that an alliance on environmental issues is possible. The spiritual reach of evangelical Christianity is nowadays increasingly extended to the environment. While the Old Testament God commands humanity to take dominion over the earth, the decree is not (as one evangelical leader recently affirmed) an excuse to trash the planet. The dominant theme in scripture as interpreted by many evangelicals is instead stewardship. Organizations like the Green Cross and the Evangelical Environmental Network (the latter a coalition of evangelical Christian agencies and institutions) are expanding their magisterium to include conservation—in religious terms, protection of the living Creation.

This evangelical interest in the environment is part of a worldwide trend among religions. In the United States, the umbrella National Religious Partnership for the Environment works with evangelical groups and other prominent organizations, including the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, the National Council of Churches of Christ, and the Coalition on the Environment and Jewish Life. In 2001, the Archbishop of Canterbury urged that "it may not be time to build an Ark like Noah, but it is high time to take better care of God's creation." Three years earlier, Bartholomew I, Patriarch of the Greek Orthodox Church, had gone further: "For humans to cause species to become extinct and to destroy the biological diversity of God's creation ... these are sins." He and Pope John Paul II later issued a "Common Declaration" that "God has not abandoned the world. It is His will that His Design and our hope for it will be realized through our co-operation in restoring its original harmony. In our own time we are witnessing a growth of an ecological awareness which needs to be encouraged, so that it will lead to practical programs and initiatives." Unfortunately, a corresponding magnitude of engagement has not yet occurred in Islam or the Eastern religions.

Every great religion offers mercy and charity to the poor. The poor of the world, of whom nearly a billion exist in the "poverty trap" of absolute destitution, are concentrated in the developing countries—the home of 80 percent of the world's population and most of Earth's biodiversity. The solution to the problems of both depends on the recognition that each depends on the other. The desperately poor have little chance to improve their lives in a devastated environment. Conversely, natural environments, where most of the Creation hangs on, cannot survive the press of land-hungry people who have nowhere else to go.

To be sure, some leaders of the religious right are reluctant to support biological conservation, an opposition sufficient to create a wedge within the evangelical movement. They may be partly afraid of paganism, by which worship of nature supplants worship of God. More realistically and importantly, opposition rises from the perceived association of environmental activism with the political left. For decades, conservatives have defined environmentalism as a movement bent on strangling the United States with regulations and bureaucratic power. This canard has dogged the U.S. environmental movement and helped keep it off the agenda of the past two presidential campaigns.

Finally, however, opinion may be changing. The mostly evangelical religious right, which, along with big business, has been the decisive source of power in the Republican Party, has begun to move care of the Creation back into the mainstream of conservative discourse. The opportunity exists to make the environment a universal concern and to render it politically nonpartisan.

STILL, FOR ALL the positive signs, I remain puzzled that so many religious leaders have hesitated to make protection of the Creation an important part of their magisterium. Pastor, help me understand: Do they believe that human-centered ethics and preparation for the afterlife are the only things that matter? Do they believe that the Second Coming is imminent and that, therefore, the condition of the planet is of little consequence? These and other similar doctrines are not gospels of hope and compassion. They are gospels of cruelty and despair.

You and I are both humanists in the broadest sense: Human welfare is at the center of our thought. So forget our disagreements, I say, and let us meet on common ground. That might not be as difficult as it first seems. When you think about it, our metaphysical differences have remarkably little effect on the conduct of our separate lives. My guess is that you and I are about equally ethical, patriotic, and altruistic. We are products of a civilization that rose from both religion and the science-based Enlightenment. We would gladly serve on the same jury, fight the same wars, and sanctify human life with the same intensity. Surely we also share a love of the Creation—and an understanding that, however the tensions play out between our opposing worldviews, however science and religion wax and wane in the minds of men, there remains the earthborn yet transcendental obligation we are both morally bound to share.

Warmly and respectfully,

Edward O. Wilson

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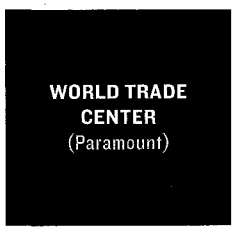
STANLEY KAUFFMANN ON FILMS

Stone Restrained

HERALDED BY THUNDEROUS publicity—and numerous a priori judgments—Oliver Stone's new film arrives, one of the fifth-anniversary commemorations of September 11. The title, **WORLD TRADE CENTER**, as with the titles of most forthcoming television pieces on the subject, is too large. No film, even ten times the two-plus hours of Stone's, could sustain that title. Stone has concentrated on one of the catastrophe's stories and has fashioned it well—with almost palpable physical detail, and with performances that never sink to exploitation.



The screenplay, a writing debut by Andrea Berloff, is based closely on fact. John McLoughlin was a sergeant in the Port Authority police force, and William Jimeno was a rookie member of the force. We see the two men leave their suburban homes on that September morning after affectionate moments with family (Jimeno's wife is pregnant) and report for duty at their headquarters. When word arrives of the first plane-and-tower collision, they and others head downtown. Soon the building they are in collapses. McLoughlin and Jimeno are both trapped in massive rubble, immobilized, within hearing distance of each other. (A third policeman, trapped near them, dies very soon.)

Stone, wisely, does not attempt to deal with the explosions themselves. We see only the shadow of a plane on one of the towers; we see—thank heaven—only one person jumping. At first the collision is treated by some people as merely an accident. (Such an accident, relatively minor, happened in 1945 at the Empire State Building.) Then the tower bursts into flame and begins to disintegrate, and the other plane hits the other tower. Stone skillfully traces the transformation of the "accident" into a gigantic catastrophe.

Much of the film concentrates on the two trapped policemen: their attempts to converse and to cheer each other, their courage, their (willed) belief in rescue, their thoughts of family, even their memories and dreams. We, of course, know that they are going to survive; but they don't.

Naturally Stone couldn't make a whole film about two immobile men, so there are plentiful scenes of action, principally of the families of the two men, the wives' and children's agony, their scratching at the facts for hope. The rescue of the two men comes about by the one touch in the film that looks like Hollywood confection but is true. (Basically. Some different details are just coming to light.) A retired U.S. Marine staff sergeant in Connecticut hears the news, puts on his fatigues, goes to the site, talks his way past the police, eventually discovers the two men, and summons help.

That sergeant, sturdily played by Michael Shannon, says something as he leaves the film about the need for good men to go out there and avenge this attack: otherwise there isn't a political note in the picture. Stone and Berloff concentrate on the disaster as such, which here is as apolitical as a mine collapse. Nicolas Cage as the police sergeant, Michael Peña as the rookie, and Maria Bello and Maggie Gyllenhaal as the two wives amply summon the different realities in which they find themselves. Stone, helped by the acute editing of David Brenner and Julie Monroe, along with the scary rendering of devastation by Seamus McGarvey's camera, has created a disaster film that is muscular but reticent and, in a moving way, respectful. There is no trace of the previous virtuosic Stone dazzle. In fact, several commentators have congratulated him on his restraint.

These congratulations are worrisome. Certainly Stone showed restraint in *World Trade Center*: who would have had it otherwise? But I hope he hasn't learned his lesson, as these comments imply, and from now on will choose only subjects that preclude his virtuosity.

Look at what Stone has done in his career. He has been one of the most adventurous, radical, and perceptive directors in American film history. As far back as *Salvador* (1986), he was upsetting popular acceptances. *Platoon*, which came in the same year, is the best film ever made about Vietnam. It is stained with some sentiment on the soundtrack that may have been added as a producer's emollient, but it is nonetheless stark, terrifyingly truthful, superbly directed. (Stone, as everyone now knows, is a decorated infantry veteran of Vietnam.) *Wall Street* (1987) is a testament of the drooling, greed-hyped "Americanism" of the Reagan years. *Born on the Fourth of July* (1989), also about Vietnam, presented Tom Cruise—Tom Cruise!—excellent in an impassioned role. *The Doors* (1991) had one of the sadly unappreciated fine performances of our time—Val Kilmer as Jim Morrison. *JFK* (also 1991) was grubbed over by historical literalists who forgot the factual liberties taken by Schiller, Kleist, and Brecht, among others, and who ignored the social perception, the cinematic imagination, with which Stone rendered the core of the film—the end of our national confidence in heaven's blessing. *Natural Born Killers* (1994), the most underrated of Stone's works, is a breathtakingly surreal Walpurgis Night of the homicidal streak in America, so generously cosseted by films and television and press. Then came *Nixon* (1995), which gave a wonderful actor (Anthony Hopkins) the extraordinary character of a man so uncomfortable in his body and being that he seemed to sublimate his discomfort through political lies.

Certainly Stone has participated in lesser pictures through the years and has himself made some quite conventional ones: *Any Given Sunday* (1999), deftly

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handled but just one more football picture; *Alexander* (2004), a stereotypical corpse that never breathed. For me, these two recent pictures in a way presage the directing of *World Trade Center*. They both show what those recent commentators call restraint.

To recognize what Stone has accomplished in his best pictures is, I believe, to salute a major talent in film history, especially noteworthy because those pictures do not merely triumph over convention—they explode it. Has he really now become a conventional director? *World Trade Center* could not have been made in the style of those earlier pictures, but was it no more than a chance for Stone to be both excellent and orderly? He is almost sixty. I hope that, as with the mature Buñuel and Bergman and Kurosawa and Ford, more unrestrained films lie ahead of him. ■

Ian Buruma

The Freedom to Offend

How communities control language.

THE STRANGEST ASPECT OF Mel Gibson's drunken outburst in Malibu was not the anti-Semitic ranting. The notion that "the fucking Jews" are "responsible for all the wars in the world" (and pretty much everything else too) is neither new nor unusual. It has been an anti-Semitic cliché since the late nineteenth century. More disturbing, I think, was the peculiar mixture of sentimental religiosity and Hollywood arrogance that came after Gibson recovered from his hangover in jail. He wished to "meet with leaders in the Jewish community, with whom I can have a one-on-one discussion to discern the appropriate path for healing." As though no one else but "leaders" would do; as though these supposed leaders were priests, or psychiatrists, or yogis in the business of personal healing. As though anti-Semitism were a wound inflicted on Gibson by the outside world.

It should be no surprise that anti-Semitism still exists, just as bigotry against blacks, or Muslims, or Sikhs, or Tutsis, or indeed Catholics still goes on. That Jews were the victims of the most systematic genocide ever attempted lends a particularly sinister resonance to anti-Semitism, but as a prejudice it is hardly unique. Mass murder of Jews, at least in the Western world, is no longer on the agenda, and it is surely not what Gibson had in mind. But social prejudice is bad enough. It is at least one sign of progress that anti-Semitism, like racial prejudice against black people, is no longer socially acceptable. We cannot call people yids or niggers without being taken to task for it, and this is a good thing.

This progress probably would not have happened without the efforts of pressure groups and communal organizations, just as workers' rights would never have been expanded, or perhaps even granted, without trade unions. Such American organizations as the Anti-Defamation League or the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People have made society more civilized. Activists and community leaders are there to make sure that it stays that way.

But like all forms of power, the power to advance the interests of vulnerable minorities is open to corruption. Just as trade-union fat cats sometimes abuse their position to accumulate power (and wealth) for its own sake, the community leaders and official watchdogs of anti-racism can be tempted to advance their own interests and those of their organizations in a way that is not necessarily helpful to the people they are supposed to defend. When the whistle is blown too often, even when it is utterly uncalled for, or when offense is taken for self-serving reasons, even where none was intended, the guardianship of civil behavior can slip into a form of intimidation, which interferes with free speech.

Ian Buruma's new book, MURDER IN AMSTERDAM: THE DEATH OF THEO VAN GOGH AND THE LIMITS OF TOLERANCE, *will be published in September by Penguin.*

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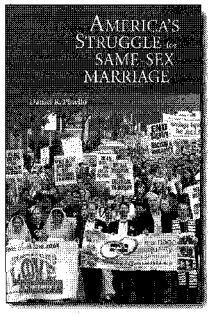

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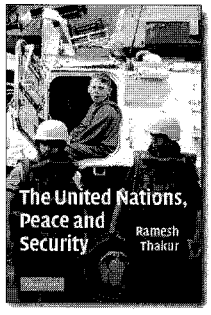

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One of the great powers appropriated by communal organizations, and by authoritarian national governments, too, is the power over the use of language. They set the terms in which their communities can be discussed by others. These terms sometimes change quite suddenly to demonstrate the clout of the leaders. We are told to say Mumbai now instead of Bombay, because the leaders of the powerful Maharastran community in India decreed it. There is nothing offensive about the word Burma, except that the military junta decided that it had to be Myanmar.

What's in a name? Quite a lot, actually. NHK, the national Japanese broadcasting company, has a constantly updated list of appropriate words for various minorities, including the socially discriminated outcastes whose traditional occupations, such as butchering, slaughtering, or leather manufacturing, were considered to be polluted (Buddhism and Shinto have strong views on purity and death). These outcastes, or *burakumin*, still face many difficulties, and they are represented by various organizations, who define the precise terms in which the minority can be spoken about. But these terms change so fast, and for such complicated reasons, and are often enforced with such heavy-handedness, that NHK, and indeed most Japanese media, prefer not to touch the subject at all. This cannot be good for the *burakumin*. When a touchy subject can no longer be openly and rationally discussed, it is left up to the bigots to talk about it irrationally.

INTIMIDATION IS MOST EFFECTIVE when the fear is free-floating and threats can be left unspoken. One example is the current fear of saying anything that might be construed as being anti-Semitic, especially in the United States, where Jews are more secure than they have ever been anywhere at any time in history. Again, to guard against anti-Semitism is plainly a good thing. But this particular whistle has been blown so often and with such shrillness that exaggerated anxiety sometimes impairs serious discussion, and not only about Israel.

Recently I experienced an example of this myself. I was invited by a curator at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York to contribute an essay to the catalogue of an exhibition on the history of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century English dress and dandyism—not a particularly delicate subject. I wished to compare the relative openness of nineteenth-century English society with continental Europe, and so I cited the example of Benjamin Disraeli, a Jewish dandy who was elected prime minister. It was quickly made clear by the editor of the catalogue, as well as by the curator of the exhibition, that this reference to a Jewish dandy had to go. I was told that I didn't know "what things are like around here." And that "members of the board are very touchy on this topic." Perhaps they are, perhaps they aren't. No member of the board had seen the reference, let alone passed judgment on it. But fear of such judgment was enough to strike the "offending" words.

These spats over language and presentation actually cross communal lines. In the current climate a writer of Jewish or Muslim or Sikh extraction can just as easily be accused of offending the "community" as an outsider. Salman Rushdie is the most famous example. There are many others. In Birmingham, England, a play titled *Behzti* (*Dishonor*), by a British Sikh author named Gurpreet Kaur Bhatti, about sex abuse and murder among British Sikhs, was discontinued after Sikhs staged a riot outside the theater. Few, if any, had read the play, but community leaders, invited to attend the dress rehearsal, had been offended by the "negative portrayal" of Sikhs. The police refused to guarantee the safety of the venue. So the show was canceled.

Monica Ali's best-selling novel *Brick Lane*, set among Bangladeshis in Britain, was going to be filmed in Brick Lane, the heart of the Bangladeshi area in East London. But then a local businessman named Abdus Salique organized the Campaign Against Monica Ali's Film Brick Lane, and threatened to burn her books, because he claimed that the novel did not present his community in the proper way. Salique and a small group of like-minded men call themselves community leaders, even though no one elected them, and most local Bangladeshis voiced no objection to the film or to Ali's novel. Still, the location for the film had to be changed.

NO MATTER HOW MUCH GOOD may have been done in the past by communal pressure groups, the increasing prominence of "community leaders" and unelected figures who claim the right to define how others should talk about their ethnic or religious communities is having a damaging effect on our right to speak freely. Rushdie has made an important distinction between attacking people and criticizing what they stand for. We should treat individual Muslims, Christians, Jews, Sikhs, and the rest with courtesy and respect, but what they think or believe must not be exempt from criticism, or even from ridicule.

The problem is that many believers are unable to make such a distinction. The Dutch film-maker Theo van Gogh was murdered almost two years ago by a radical Islamist because he had "insulted the Prophet." Van Gogh often said offensive, even disgusting things, but he never mocked an individual Muslim. He mocked only the faith. For his killer, however, there was no difference. And our democratically elected leaders in government are more and more frightened into pandering to this sentiment. The British government introduced a new law this year against stirring up hatred of people on the grounds of their religious beliefs. This sounds very progressive and noble-minded. In fact, it is not. Where exactly is the border between criticism or ridicule and "stirring up hatred"? Who defines the meaning of hatred? And who decides when it has been stirred up? In Salique's view, that is exactly what Ali, the daughter of a Bangladeshi, was doing with her gently satirical novel about a Bangladeshi family in London.

Allowing self-elected (or even popularly elected) leaders of minority communities to delegitimate criticism, to censor it by threatening violence (as happened in Birmingham), plays into the hands of bigots. Given his stated view that Jews run the world, it is no wonder that Mel Gibson wants to sit down with their leaders. The increasing number of people who throw their weight around on behalf of Jews and other minorities only confirm what sinister conspiracy theorists think anyway.

In one sense, leaders of minorities are a bit like bosses of criminal gangs. Crime syndicates, organized along ethnic lines, often claim to represent the interests of recent immigrants who have nowhere else to turn in an unfamiliar country. But which second- or third-generation Italian-American or British-Chinese would want to be represented by the Mafia or the Chinese Triads? Most people, once they move into the middle class, want to be identified as na-

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tional citizens, anyway, rather than as members of ethnic or religious communities, although this does not exclude the possibility of belonging to both.

The problem of identification is not the same everywhere. The French Republic goes out of its way to identify all its passport holders only as citizens, and pretends that ethnic and religious divisions are irrelevant. This is enlightened, but it makes it harder to discuss the particular problems faced by immigrants who still live in isolated communities. Officially, problems based on ethnic or religious background are not supposed to exist. The old idea of the melting pot in the United States was somewhat analogous to this: everyone, regardless of where he or she came from, would become an American. But this has begun to unravel as the worship of ethnicity and the politics of "identity" emphasize and celebrate differences rather than a universal American civic identity.

There is a reactionary aspect to the ideal of multiculturalism as it is espoused in Britain or the Netherlands, and increasingly even in the United States. It presumes that minorities would rather be represented by ethnic or religious leaders than by national ones. This gives too much power to community leaders whose status is dependent on their ability to control the way we speak or think about the people supposedly in their charge, and it stops people from thinking of themselves as individuals and citizens. In fact, it thwarts rational discussion altogether. And rational discussion is a vital aspect of political education. It certainly was necessary to educate the mainstream of democratic societies to respect the rights of minorities, but now immigrants and their offspring must learn that to be offended is the price we all must pay for our freedom of speech and freedom of thought. Since many immigrants come from places where such freedom does not exist, they should be the first to appreciate its benefits. ■

Philip Gossett
Opera Buffa

THE TOUGHEST SHOW ON EARTH: MY RISE AND REIGN AT THE METROPOLITAN OPERA
By Joseph Volpe
with Charles Michener
(Alfred A. Knopf, 304 pp., $25.95)

THE RAGS-TO-RICHES MYTH never fails to impress. Whether it be the scullery maid who becomes the princess or the apprentice carpenter who becomes the big boss at the Metropolitan Opera, it sets up a cogent model for an America where rampant capitalism promises equal opportunity. Joseph Volpe wears his scruffiness with pride. "I had never studied music," he announces in his new memoir. "I didn't have a degree in arts management. I'd barely graduated from high school." A few pages later he is more specific: "I hated school."

What Volpe liked was manual labor, first in gas stations or his father's clothing factory, and later as a carpenter, building scenery at the Booth Theater on Broadway and then, starting in 1964, at the Metropolitan Opera: "Everything I knew about running an opera house I had figured out for myself, starting by using my hands." His scorn for his predecessor as general manager, Hugh Southern, is palpable: "[His] only qualification for running the company seemed to be that he'd never seen the front office of a great opera house—but he sported an English accent, courtesy of Cambridge University." Not for Volpe a university degree, and certainly not an English one: his self-image is out of Damon Runyon, as is his Broadway mentor, Eddie Lapidus, known as "King Farouk," who boasted that the curtain would come down at 10:20 p.m. no matter what the director or the actors thought, since he had to catch a train home.

Through thirty years of hard work and observation, Volpe did indeed figure out some elements of running the company, for which he then served as general manager from 1993 until July 2006. He is at his most endearing when he describes his first love, carpentry and the construction of scenery: "Working with theatrical scenery is like solving an enormous three-dimensional puzzle." He understands from within why the New York State Theater is a problem for an opera company, since its stage was "designed to muffle the sound of dancers' feet without doing anything for singers' voices." He was there for the inauguration of the new Met in 1966 and helped to set up its carpenter shops. About *Antony and Cleopatra* by Samuel Barber, the work given its world premiere on opening night, all he says is that it "got lousy reviews." Yet our interest is caught when we learn that "The first curtain had to be rehung so that its back side faced the audience, because the gold pattern was too bright." And we are solidly with Volpe when he solves a technical problem in the set and tells an unidentified Italian that "some wacko designer put up too much scenery." The Italian turned out to be Franco Zeffirelli.

When, near the end of his book, Volpe returns to one of the carpenter shops, he muses: "There was no one around at this hour, but the smell of recently cut plywood was fresh and so were the ghosts of Tex Lawrence's crew, with whom I'd set the place up forty years ago." No one understood better the complexities of moving scenery around, striking one set from a matinee and setting up another for the evening performance. And from this hands-on experience Volpe developed a keen awareness of what it meant to handle all the technical and personnel issues central to an opera house: "The Met lives in a state of near war: hundreds of people working on a dozen productions, current and future ones, each with a deadline that can't be missed." Volpe made certain that each of them was where he needed to be when he needed to be there.

While good management is crucial to any organization, and opera houses are no exception, ultimately we judge an arts organization by what it does, not by how it operates. Volpe did much that was admirable during his reign at the Met, and he shows genuine affection for its people, more than justifying Beverly Sills's remark that "Joe is not an easy man to deal with, but Joe is a sane, rational man." Most important, he main-

Philip Gossett's new book, DIVAS AND SCHOLARS: PERFORMING ITALIAN OPERA, *has just been published by the University of Chicago Press.*

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tained a good working relationship with music director James Levine, even though he refers to the operas by Schönberg, Berg, and Britten that Levine championed as "box-office poison." And he gets to the heart of the Levine magic when he writes that "Singers love to work with Jimmy because he has the patience of an elephant and because he knows everything there is to know about their craft. No conductor is better at enabling singers to do their best." Volpe points with pride to the expansion of the Russian and Czech repertory under his watch, thanks to the presence of Valéry Gergiev as principal guest conductor. And he writes with sensitivity about the wonderful support the Met received from a succession of generous donors.

YET MUCH OF WHAT THE MET did under Volpe was less successful, and his own words help to explain why. In a series of anecdotes, we watch him emerging victorious from one confrontation after another with directors, singers, unions, and other managers at "Leakin' Center." These victories, however, were sometimes Pyrrhic, although his "take no prisoners" style does not permit him to recognize this.

Consider the following question: how many performances each week should musicians in the Met's orchestra be required to play? According to Volpe, before 1965 they had to play every performance, seven in all. That number was reduced to five in 1965. During contract negotiations for the 1980–1981 season, the musicians wanted the number further reduced to four. Apparently Anthony Bliss, who became the executive director of the Met in 1975 (and from 1981 the general manager), did not at first object to this demand, but later he dug in his heels. His indecision played havoc with the negotiations. Volpe argues that the proposed reduction was justified by the greater complexity of the music being performed (such as Berg's *Lulu* or the operas of Wagner), which required more concentration and more independent rehearsal time, and by the fact that fewer musicians lived near Lincoln Center and hence needed to commute greater distances. From an economic point of view, moreover, it was a plausible request: the Met could hire "extras at less pay and with no benefits" and the regular orchestra could be asked to give something back (four hours of extra rehearsal time and participation in a Sunday concert for the "pension fund").

Volpe developed a strong working relationship with the lawyer representing the musicians, Philip Sipser, and they thereafter managed to keep contract negotiations under control. Yet something was seriously amiss. Sipser affirmed that "Mr. Levine has already assured us that there will be no loss of artistic quality," but no one seems to have questioned that judgment. At this point the management skills vaunted by Volpe came directly into conflict with artistic questions. Levine is as good an opera conductor as can be found anywhere, but the artistic quality about which he is most concerned regards the performances that he himself conducts. Met performances are one thing when he or other prestigious conductors consistently obtain the services of the best members of the orchestra, but what happens on the other nights, when the orchestra is made up of "extras at less pay and with no benefits"? With all the respect in the world for those musicians, professionals to a person, there is no way the house can maintain the same artistic level with a constantly changing body of musicians, some of whom are called for performances without having rehearsed sufficiently. As a result, the Met orchestra is a sometimes affair, and anyone who hears a late-season *La Traviata* or *Turandot* knows it. Those are not the performances reviewed in *The New York Times*, of course.

THERE WERE OTHER MANAGEMENT decisions that had a serious impact on artistic quality at the Met. Volpe places himself firmly behind his predecessor Rudolf Bing's "insistence on expensive, high-powered new productions, which he regarded—rightly—as essential long-term investments in the Met's future." Yet very different approaches to new productions were taken by two stage directors, John Dexter and Franco Zeffirelli, both of whom Volpe claims to have admired.

Dexter was director of productions during the second half of the 1970s as part of a management troika, with the general manager (first Schuyler Chapin, later Bliss) and the music director (Levine), at a time when Volpe was being promoted from his position as head of the carpenter shop to technical director and then to director of operations of the house. He watched as Dexter took up the "mandate from the trustees to keep the costs of new productions as low as possible" by invoking the world of the dramatic stage he had known from his days at London's Royal Court Theatre and National Theatre. As Dexter wrote in his diary: "Only at the Metropolitan has time stood still. The curtain can still rise on a performance and the audience can be transported back to the nineteenth century and sit and wallow in an imaginary world." Instead, Dexter favored a new approach: "Only when the operatic stage can share the freedom of the dramatic stage can the medium exist in the twentieth century and maybe help us understand the world and ourselves, instead of remaining the morphine of the over-privileged."

Dexter was responsible for a series of artistic triumphs, many featuring twentieth-century repertory—Britten's *Billy Budd*, Poulenc's *The Dialogues of the Carmelites*, and Weill's *The Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny*. By the early 1980s, however, the influence of Dexter's "lean-and-mean productions" was on the wane, and in large part the director blamed Volpe, who—in his new capacity as director of operations—did not give him the support that he expected. For once in his narrative, Volpe does not respond in kind, insisting rather that he learned much from Dexter.

Zeffirelli, by contrast, was enthusiastically encouraged by Volpe and by an important financial supporter of the Met, the Texas widow Sybil Harrington, and he wallowed in excess. This is not meant to deny that Zeffirelli, in Volpe's words, "is such a master of stage design—of color and architecture, perspective and movement—that no matter how opulent his productions become, they never look cluttered." But these monumental *Bohème*, *Tosca*, and *Turandot* stagings live on and on, diverting the attention of generations of operagoers from what may or may not be going on musically or dramatically. Zeffirelli extracted superb performances from artists such as Teresa Stratas and José Carreras when he first unveiled his *Bohème* in 1981, but what kept bringing in the tourists over the years and paying the bills was the Café Momus scene, with "143 Parisian revelers, 24 street urchins, 19 soldiers, 14 vendors, a marching band of 12, 2 live animals, and a fake bear."

While Volpe claims that the Met under his regime embraced "a greater variety of production styles than any other opera house in the world," he inveighs

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against most stage directors:

> I had developed a real distaste for what the Europeans call "regie opera"—productions in which a director transforms a work into something unrecognizable, according to some personal "vision." For me, most of these productions backfired because the director had rewritten the story for his own purposes, rather than attempting to translate it into terms the audience could understand. Forget about opera as spectacle, as entertainment, as *enjoyment*. These pedants, who were pretending to be innovators, were really doing commentaries about opera. I wasn't interested in going back to school.

What a tirade: one wonders if Volpe has seen a single important Shakespearian production of the past forty years by Peter Brooks, or Yukio Ninagawa, or Eimuntas Nekrosius, among others. In talking about the Booth Theater, Volpe remarks that he worked on plays by Chekhov, Arthur Kopit, and Peter Shaffer, but gives no hint that he had any interest in or knowledge of them. Too much like going back to school, I suppose.

AS THE BOOK PROCEEDS, VOLPE'S remarks become even nastier. He throws out a projected Werner Herzog *Magic Flute*, substituting a pretty David Hockney setting. (Later, for the same opera, he engages Julie Taymor, of *Lion King* fame, for another audience-friendly production.) He demonizes the "Eurotrash face" of Giancarlo Del Monaco's Puccini and Elijah Moshinsky's Verdi, with the remark that "any attempt to relocate these arguments, update them, stylize them, or add a layer of contemporary irony risks making them look silly." Some of his most pungent remarks are reserved for Jonathan Miller. Cecilia Bartoli's contract with the Met to appear as Susanna in *The Marriage of Figaro* granted her the right to sing at some performances two substitute arias that Mozart himself prepared for the character, but Miller objected vehemently to the changes. I think that Bartoli was perfectly justified in making these substitutions, using music Mozart himself had prepared for a different singer. (Riccardo Muti will conduct Verdi's *Attila* at the Met in 2010, and I hope he will have his Foresto sing Verdi's three different *Romanze* in rotation.)

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Miller certainly went awry in bringing his complaints to the press, but Volpe served neither the Met nor his public by burning his bridges with Miller, a fascinating director and theatrical force. In the book, Volpe continues to pummel him: "When I didn't offer him any more productions or invite him back to direct the *Figaro* revival, Miller began telling everybody that the Met had 'fired' him. Baloney. He was stroking his ego. I was running an opera house. He fired himself."

Volpe speaks with scorn of three controversial productions: the Peter Hall *Macbeth*, the Francesca Zambello *Lucia di Lammermoor*, and the Graham Vick *Il Trovatore*. While even great directors can make mistakes, it is insufficient to say that the Met audience "can get highly offended when a director's pursuit of artistic liberties violates their pursuit of happiness." The audience does not speak a single language, and opera production is not solely about the "pursuit of happiness." The art form thrives on innovation and intelligence. Perhaps the problem goes back to Bing: why should every production be built to last for generations? What is to stop a major company—even the Met—from occasionally devising an experimental "lean-and-mean" production, meant to last for one or two seasons? Give us a new perspective on *Carmen*; do it with flair, theatricality, and fine singers; then retire it. That is the way many houses operate, even without enormous governmental subsidies. Such an approach, though, seems to have been anathema to Volpe. Whether it could work in New York still remains to be seen.

When it comes to artists, Volpe has strong likes and dislikes, some of which can turn malicious: "I heard that his personal life was in disarray …"; "his marriage had ended and the woman he now introduced as his wife was really his girlfriend." Language about a singer being "large-figured" or "unalluring" is reserved for those he does not favor and avoided for those he supports. Should a general manager really accuse one of Italy's finest young conductors, Daniele Gatti, of "taking certain sections so slow that the singers were finding them difficult to sing"? Rehearsals are there to solve that problem, to balance what singers are used to doing with a conductor's insights into a score. I have known Gatti's work for more than fifteen years, and he is a serious artist who never makes decisions arbitrarily. When conducting Rossini's *Barber of Seville* this past year, he took the slowest tempo I ever heard to open the first-act finale; but once I got used to it, I realized that Gatti's orchestra was anticipating the pretended drunkenness of the Count. The singers finally had no difficulty adapting themselves. (Now that Volpe is gone, it is time to ask Gatti back to New York.)

The director of an opera company must deal constantly with singers who, in Volpe's apt characterization, are like "trapeze artists, alone up there on the thin wire of a vocal cord without a safety net." He points with pride to having helped develop singers such as Renée Fleming, but the Kathleen Battle follies was not his finest moment. In being late for rehearsals or not showing up at all, in making unreasonable demands on her colleagues, in acting out her frustrations when she was not accorded the attention she thought she deserved, Battle surely behaved atrociously, as Volpe points out, and her behavior was apparently getting worse. But Volpe's moralizing reeks of grandstanding: "No artist is more important than the art form. No artist can be excused for the abuse of colleagues. It's my responsibility to protect the integrity of this great company." This is one of the few times in the book in which Volpe suggests that he might occasionally have a second thought: "I've sometimes felt that I should have been able to find a way to help this beautiful, talented woman avoid the catastrophe."

He nicely describes the differences in personality and style between the Met's two dominant tenors, Luciano Pavarotti and Placido Domingo, but he seems prepared to make every excuse for Pavarotti's canceling performances, even taking *The New York Times* to task for criticizing him. His judgment of Pavarotti's behavior might have appeared more objective had he mentioned that the general manager of the Lyric Opera of Chicago, Ardis Krainik, had banned Pavarotti from her theater a decade earlier, after the cancellations had gotten out of hand. Volpe's admiration for what had been Pavarotti's artistry and his personal affection for the "king of the opera world" apparently make such objectivity difficult.

Nor does he offer any objectivity about his relationship with the other institutions at Lincoln Center. In one case after another, Volpe blocked actions in the Development Project, claiming that "millions of dollars have been squandered because of poor judgment and poor leadership." He remained the tough kid fighting the good fight: "I didn't have any social standing to worry about. I wasn't there for self-esteem." No, he was there to make sure that the Met got its share, and compromise with other institutions was a very small part of his vocabulary.

By appointing Peter Gelb as the new general manager of the company, the Board of Directors of the Met have chosen a different path. Gelb comes from an intellectual family in New York (his father served as managing editor of *The New York Times* and with his wife wrote an acclaimed life of Eugene O'Neill). His career has included working for the Boston Symphony Orchestra, serving as

Elegy: Airport

Then there was snow
on a plane's dead wing,
over the hull that stretched like a seedpod,
killing the windshield,
clogging the flaps,
dying and dying in the pall of night.

—

Then it occurred to me: *petal-like,*
like petals detached and adrift on a breeze
or down from a vase-full,
where they'd wilt and curl,
the blossoms that nodded
on a curving stem.

—

It is, perhaps, better,
is mercy and numb—
but I couldn't believe it.
The airport was still and the snow just died
on the corpselike planes
in their vanishing rows.

KEVIN PRUFER

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a concert manager with Columbia Artists Management Inc. (where his clients included Vladimir Horowitz), producing television shows (I worked with him on a production in the mid-1980s) and Met telecasts, and serving as president of Sony Classical, where he developed a crossover line that included the soundtrack to the film *Titanic*. However carefully he has avoided saying so, Gelb's plans are an implicit repudiation of Volpe's Met. He intends to sponsor more new productions with a less traditional group of stage and movie directors (Anthony Minghella or Mary Zimmermann); to commission more new operas (the first announced is from Osvaldo Golijov); to lower some ticket prices so as to attract new audiences and to develop family-oriented programs for the holidays; to invite to the Met major conductors who have not before worked there (Muti, Salonen); to seek collaborations with Lincoln Center Theater, broadening the very idea of what opera is.

Volpe has tried to keep the heat down during the recent transition, although occasionally his divergent views emerge, as in this remark on a radio program last May: "I think doing more new productions will help increase the box office, because there's always excitement about new productions. Doing world commissions I do not believe has the same effect, because the Met audience today really—they're quite conservative. So, I think it's questionable. I think, yes, if one is going to try to attract a new audience, it's surely worth the experiment if you can finance it." No one knows, of course, whether Gelb's ideas will help revitalize the Met or whether they will antagonize a significant part of the audience. But there is no doubt that ideas are circulating again, for the first time in a long time, in and around the operatic behemoth of New York. That is already a considerable accomplishment. ■

Oren Harman
The Evolution of Evolution

EVOLUTION IN FOUR DIMENSIONS: GENETIC, EPIGENETIC, BEHAVIORAL, AND SYMBOLIC VARIATION IN THE HISTORY OF LIFE
By Eva Jablonka and Marion J. Lamb
(MIT Press, 462 pp., $34.95)

I.

AT A CONFERENCE HELD AT Princeton University in 1968 to discuss Thomas Kuhn's book *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, the author slipped into the back of the room to listen to the proceedings. As the speakers enthusiastically and eruditely related the meaning of a "Kuhnian paradigm," and a "Kuhnian revolution," and "Kuhnian relativism," Kuhn himself felt a cold sweat develop under his shirt. Constrained inconspicuousness finally gave way to uncontrollable outrage: "But I am not a Kuhnian!" Kuhn shouted, provoking an awkward silence in the stunned room.

Prophets, real or imagined, are almost always misinterpreted. Kuhn was the prophet of a new way of looking at scientific revolutions, and the people who called themselves by his name often peddled ideas that had little to do with his own. The same can be said of Charles Darwin, the hero of perhaps the greatest scientific revolution of all time. As this important book by Eva Jablonka and Marion J. Lamb shows, the twentieth-century "neo-Darwinians" told the evolutionary story in their own particular way, and some of the richness of evolution that their forebear had described fell into neglect. There was much of which Darwin was innocently unaware—not least of which being the existence of the gene—and much that he got wrong, but his instincts often outstripped his knowledge. Marshaling current evidence from studies of evolution and development, Jablonka and Lamb call for a relaxation of the orthodoxy established by Darwin's followers in favor of a return to the wise words of the founder himself.

IN EARLY JANUARY 1832, ON THE creaky wooden deck of the *HMS Beagle*, Charles Darwin spotted a black-backed gull encircling the hull of the ship, which had been commissioned by the British Admiralty, under the command of Captain Robert Fitzroy to map the coastline of South America. Less than a fortnight at sea, the *Beagle* was quarantined off the coast of Tenerife, the locals afraid that one or more of its seventy-five shipmates might have cholera. A bored Darwin ducked down to the poop cabin to retrieve his pistol and came back up on deck, where he shot the bird and opened its stomach to dissect its contents. Poking at the odorous, liquidy mush with his dissecting knife, he found a small cuttlefish, still intact, about two inches long. This became specimen number one of the *Beagle* collection. The natural history adventure had begun.

The *Beagle* was now well on its way to the South Seas. En route to Buenos Aires in October 1832, Darwin noticed swarms of phosphorescent zoophytes, each smaller than the dot above this i, illuminating the waves surrounding the ship with the glow of a pale green light as it sailed into the dark ocean. Darwin was aware of the prevalent scientific explanation: the tiny marine creatures had been put there by God to help sailors avoid shipwreck on gloomy nights at sea. This was the doctrine of finalism, or teleology, the very backbone of a tradition of natural theology in which Darwin's generation had been reared.

Had a stone been encountered by a man traversing a heath, the Anglican archdeacon William Paley wrote in his immensely popular book *Natural Theology* in 1802, one might imagine with no knowledge to the contrary that it had lain there forever; but were the same man to encounter a mechanical watch on the same heath, replete with its coiled elastic springs and wheels conducting the motion from the fusee to the balance and from the balance to the pointer, he would be forced to infer the inevitable: "that the watch must have had a maker—that there must have existed, at some time and at some place or other, an artificer or artificers who formed it [for] the purpose for which we find it actually to answer, who comprehended its construction and designed its use." The crystal-

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line lens of the eye of the fish, the aerodynamic perfection of the wing of the eagle, the otherwise incomprehensible florescence of the minuscule zoophyte—all were unassailable evidence of the benevolence of God, and of His fingerprints on all creation. Each species was specially intended, and remained fixed forevermore. "There cannot be design without a designer," Paley wrote, "contrivance without a contriver.... Arrangement, disposition of parts, subserviency of means to an end, relation of instruments to a use, imply the presence of intelligence and mind."

Nature's wonders were staggering indeed. Darwin netted a Portuguese man-of-war, its jelly-like translucent float with a comb of pleats along the top like a Mohican haircut raised like a sail to catch the wind while its bright purple trailing tentacles plummeted tens of meters into the deep, like chains of coiled jewels. Capybaras, tucutucos, tyrant-flycatchers, carrion hawks: the splendor—and the variation—was endless. Describing these mysterious creatures in a letter to the Cambridge botanist John Henslow back in England, Darwin suddenly stopped: "After this I had better be silent—for you will think me a Baron Munchausen among naturalists."

But Darwin would not have God's benevolence stand as a proxy for scientific explanation. The glow ordained to direct lost sailors, he was certain, was simply phosphorescence caused by the decomposing bodies of the millions of dead zoophytes caught among the live ones—a process by which the ocean purified itself, like breathing out toxins. This was purpose enough, God's benevolence notwithstanding. So the true beauty of Nature could be unmasked only by uncovering its own laws, not God's divinations. Paley's answers now seemed to Darwin to turn into questions: if God were bracketed, and natural laws sought out in his stead, how could the seamless fit between organisms' forms and functions be explained? How did Nature come to seem so perfect?

One way to look at the problem would be to study Nature's imperfections, long recognized as a puzzle, and unsuccessfully explained away by the argument for design. Why on earth do flightless kiwis have vestiges of wings, or snakes vestiges of leg bones, or moles vestiges of once-functional eyes? Contrary to Paley's utilitarian creationism, idealists like the eminent London anatomist Richard Owen championed a natural philosophy that paid little heed to every little finicky detail of adaptation, focusing instead on Nature's grander plan. If the criterion in nature was function, as Paley and the utilitarian-creationists would have it, why were the dugong's fin, the bat's wing, and the horse's leg so similar in underlying design? Why was there no correlation between structure and use? Idealists embraced Nature's imperfections because if form takes priority over function, then inutility and maladaptation are to be expected. God's design was manifested through the general pattern of related archetypal forms; explaining each adaptation in every species in terms of final causes did not seem like science to Owen and his gang.

But Darwin's inclinations were even more exacting. "The explanation of types of structures in classes," he would later write in his notebook, "as resulting from the will of the deity, to create animals on certain plans,—is no explanation—it has not the character of a physical law / & is therefore utterly useless.—it foretells nothing / because we know nothing of the will of the Deity, how it acts & whether constant or inconstant like that of man.—the cause given we know not the effect...." Continuing his search for a natural explanation to encompass both perfections and imperfections, Darwin wondered about the mysteries of biogeography as well. Why are there fewer endemic species on islands than on the mainland? Where did these species come from? Why are they so similar to mainland species if their natural surroundings are so different? A fixity-of-species man upon embarkation, Darwin returned to England in October 1836 leaning toward a more dynamic view of Nature and her ways. Still unsure of the physical law to explain away all conundrums, he nevertheless arrived after nearly five years at sea with "such facts [that] would undermine the stability of species."

Upon his return, Darwin was promptly made a fellow of the Geological Society, and was elected to its governing council a year later. In 1838, just twenty-nine years old, he was elected to the Athenaeum, and a short time later to the Royal Society. At about this time, however, Darwin began living something of a double life. Outwardly he was preparing his well-received geological theories for publication and gaining the respect of the English scientific establishment. Privately, and far from view, he had already begun a remarkable series of secret notebooks in which he initiated a set of questions and answers about "the species problem."

Mindful that his heretical ideas might be actionable under the laws governing blasphemy and sedition, Darwin jotted down to himself: "mention persecution of early astronomers—then add chief good of individual scientific men, is to push their science a few years in advance only of their age." Still lacking a mechanism, Darwin was not yet ready to publish, but he would not abandon the dangerous path into which his thoughts had led him. "Plato says in *Phaedo* that our 'imaginary ideas' arise from the pre-existence of the soul, are not derivable from experience," he furtively scribbled in a secret notebook on one of his visits to the London Zoo. Looking left and right, weighing the danger, he added, firm but trembling, "read monkeys for preexistence."

In October 1838, Darwin read *An Essay on the Principle of Population* by the clergyman and former professor of political economy Thomas Malthus. The idea that population increases geometrically while food supply increases arithmetically was meant by Malthus to prove that starvation, wars, death, and suffering were never the consequence of the defects of one political system or another, but rather the necessary results of a natural law. A Whig and a supporter of Poor Law action to ameliorate the condition of the destitute, Darwin was not sympathetic to Malthus's reactionary politics, but applying the clergyman's law to nature was a different thing. In his autobiography, Darwin recalled his immediate realization that given the struggle for existence everywhere, "favorable variations would tend to be preserved, and unfavorable ones to be destroyed. The result of this would be the formation of new species. Here, then, I had at last got a theory"—the principle of natural selection—"by which to work."

If populations in the wild have such high rates of fertility that their size would increase exponentially if not constrained; if it is known that, excepting seasonal fluctuations, the size of populations remains stable over time; if we accept that the resources available to a species are limited—then it follows that there must be intense competition, or a struggle for existence, among the members of a

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species. And if no two members of a population are identical, and some of these differences render the life chances—or fitness—of some greater than others, *and if they are inherited*, then it follows that the selection of the fitter over the less fit will, over time, lead to evolution. Darwin's logic was straightforward and simple—even a child could grasp it—and it would become the bedrock of biology. "How extremely stupid of me not to have thought of that" was T. H. Huxley's reaction when he came to see the light.

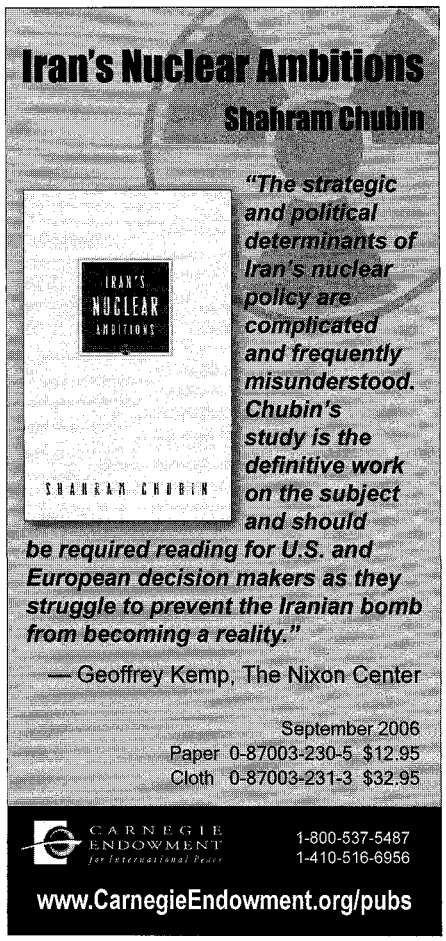
The theory more or less in place, the longest intellectual gestation in recorded history now began. For Darwin, the case for this unwanted child had to be perfect. Though extremely successful with popular audiences, the reception among scientists of the anonymous publication in 1844 of *Vestiges of the Natural History of Creation*, a book that argued, muddleheadedly and with no good mechanism, for the transmutation of species in a God-created world, made clear to Darwin just how much he stood to lose. "I believe some woman is the author, partly from the utter ignorance the book displays of all sound physical knowledge," wrote Adam Sedgwick, the Cambridge Professor of Geology, in a critical review pretty representative of the scientific establishment's view. "If it is true, religion is a lie; human law a mass of folly and a base injustice; morality is moonshine." (In fact, the author was Robert Chambers, an encyclopedist, journalist, and publisher from Edinburgh.) Painfully wary of hurting anyone's feelings, especially those of his devoutly Christian wife, or antagonizing his respectable scientific colleagues and Athenaeum friends, Darwin witnessed the uproar that *Vestiges* created and put his theory deep in the drawer. For the next fourteen years he devoted much of his time to a monumental two-volume treatise on barnacles.

Then, one pleasant morning in June 1858, Darwin sat down to drink his tea and open his mail. A letter posted from the jungles of the Malay Archipelago from the young naturalist Alfred Russell Wallace caught his eye. In a fit of delirium, in the space of a couple of hours between the onset of chills and their subsiding in a pool of sweat, Wallace had achieved in the jungle the same eureka moment that had visited Darwin in the drawing room upon reading Malthus many years before. Astonished by the similarity between Wallace's thinking and his own, and growing panicked with every turn of the page, Darwin ran to his powerful scientific friends Charles Lyell and Joseph Hooker, who arranged for a joint paper to be read to the Linnaean Society of London (along with a letter that Darwin had written to the Harvard botanist Asa Gray in 1857, and a copy of a sketch of the theory he had penned in 1844 to ensure his priority). Still frantic lest he lose precedence, Darwin abandoned his monumental work on species and furiously put pen to paper to produce an "abstract" instead. Better known to the world by the title *On the Origin of Species*, the abstract was published on November 24, 1859.

By focusing on natural mechanisms instead of on godly design, Darwin turned natural theology into natural science. This did not make the vanguard of the scientific establishment happy. Harvard's eminent Swiss zoologist Louis Agassiz thought evolution was "a scientific mistake, untrue in its facts, unscientific in its methods, and mischievous in its tendency." John Herschel, England's leading philosopher-scientist, called natural selection "the law of higgeldy-piggeldy," (To which Darwin replied: "What this exactly means I do not know, but it is evidently very contemptuous.") But the fact of evolution, if not yet its precise mechanism, was here to stay. Darwin's "bulldog" Huxley made this clear in a rather colorful way. His great rival, "Soapy" Sam Wilberforce, the bishop of Oxford and an ardent creationist, had been struck by a branch while riding his horse and died. "Finally, reality and Wilberforce's brain have met, and the result has been fatal," Huxley responded when he heard the news.

II.

DARWIN'S MOST DIFFICULT task was to explain where all the variation upon which natural selection acts comes from, for without variation natural selection would remain sadly unemployed and little in Nature would ever evolve. It was clear to him that the origin of variation was closely related to the mechanism of heredity, but unfortunately little was known about how traits are passed on from one generation to the next. "Our ignorance of the laws of variation is profound," Darwin wrote in *Origin*. "Not in one case out of a hundred can we pretend to assign any reason why this or that part is varied."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Variation could be the result of some dimly perceived law of development, something Darwin called "correlation of growth," whereby any change in an embryo or larva would entail a change in the mature animal, sometimes with extremely distinct results. Thus did Darwin observe cats with blue eyes to be invariably deaf, or hairless dogs habitually the owners of imperfect teeth. But variation could arise alternatively from the direct action of the conditions of life, irrespective of the organism's actions, such that coarse ground might produce protective padding on the camel's knee, or grainy wind result in the slanted eyes of the inhabitant of Far Eastern deserts. Active use or disuse of an organ or function, such as the blacksmith's forearm or the mole's eyes, might also be a source of variation, for the inherited change, as Jean-Baptiste Lamarck and Darwin's own grandfather Erasmus Darwin had suggested at the turn of the nineteenth century, would pass from one generation to the next and thereby augment the pool of new elements. Darwin was not quite sure why, but he knew that there existed much more variation in nature than most naturalists were prepared to admit, and that this variation had to come from somewhere.

"Variability is governed by many unknown laws" was Darwin's reply to those who would have God responsible for every hue of feather and every angle of tooth. Once it existed, natural selection would take care of the rest. But this simply would not fly for most of Darwin's contemporaries. Relinquishing variation to natural forces was tantamount to claiming that variation was arbitrary, with no ordained or foreseeable end. The idea of evolution could be stomached by most (including many liberal Christians), but could anyone really believe that the origin of the variation in Nature was random? Drawing a triumphant analogy with Swift's sardonic account of the Laputan practice of writing books by combining words randomly, Herschel answered for most: "We can no more accept the principle of arbitrary and causal variation and natural selection as a sufficient account, *per se*, of the past and present organic world, than we can receive the Laputan method of composing books (pushed *à l'outrance*) as a sufficient one of Shakespeare and the *Principia*."

Those who were convinced by evolution but could not bring themselves to believe that it was based on a cold, thoughtless mechanism of selection of random variation sought out other explanations. Asa Gray, an evolutionist and devout Christian, offered what John Dewey later mocked as "design on the installment plan" as an alternative: according to this theory, God provides a pool of preeminently suitable variations for selection to work upon. Darwin himself took a different tack. He resurrected the old theory of Lamarck (who had died poor and blind and was buried in a pauper's grave in Montparnasse) and combined it with his own model of a hereditary mechanism to allow for the inheritance of acquired traits. The "provisional hypothesis of pangenesis," introduced in Darwin's *Animals and Plants Under Domestication* in 1868, argued that invisible gemmules, spread throughout the body, act as memory cells recording the experiences of the organism. As they migrate from the arms and legs and lungs and toes to the gonads to create the sex cells, they bring with them the knowledge gleaned by experience and pass it down to the next generation. The blacksmith's son's forearms would bulge on account of the blacksmith's toil.

Darwin was making an interesting point: that the biology of organisms and their conditions of life are intimately entwined. Variation is not wholly random; it is often directed by the forces of necessity encountered by the organism as it goes about the business of life and development. Nature did not stand opposed to nurture, as Darwin's cousin Francis Galton intoned, resurrecting a Shakespearean alliteration ("A devil, a born devil, on whose nature nurture can never stick," says Prospero of Caliban in *The Tempest*). Instead, biology reacts to environments, producing new forms.

DARWIN DIED IN 1882 AND was buried beneath Newton's tomb in Westminster Abbey, beside John "Higgeldy-Piggeldy" Herschel. But there was a deep irony concealed in this august proceeding, for Darwin's originality was to propose the mechanism for evolution—natural selection—rather than the idea of transmutation itself, for which there were many forerunners. By the time his body was interred, natural selection could easily have been put to rest beside him. Darwin had won the battle for evolution, but he had failed to convince anybody that natural selection was its device.

A greater irony still was that those men who began to call themselves "Darwinists" championed natural selection to the exclusion of Darwin's own Lamarckian bent. August Weismann, a taciturn German whose failing eyes increasingly forced him from microscopy to theoretical biology, countered Darwin's "provisional hypothesis of pangenesis" with his own equally literary "immortal river of the germ plasm." Weismann's notion was that the body and the sex cells are totally and wholly distinct, meaning that life experiences could never be passed down to the next age, Lamarck's giraffes and Darwin's pangenes notwithstanding. The germ cells were like an immortal river, unsullied by the dirty banks of life, flowing from egg to egg and from sperm to sperm from one generation to the next. Heredity and environment were two opposing entities, never entwined, never penetrating each other. Nature and nurture met face-to-face only when nature blindly selected those variations (produced randomly in the germ plasm) that rendered their lucky bearers more fit for this world. If there was still some telos (though not a divine one) encrypted in Darwin's Lamarckian idea that through its actions the organism could direct the biological fate of its offspring, Weismann now stripped nature of any such ability. Natural selection, like Weismann himself at the end of his days, was truly and hollowly blind.

When the Moravian monk Gregor Mendel's paper from 1865 on the laws of inheritance was rediscovered independently by three European researchers in 1900, an entire new world of association was introduced into the debate. Mendel's hereditary factors, now termed "genes," could undergo internal changes, unaffected by the environment. The Dutchman Hugo de Vries called these changes "mutations" in 1904, and the Mendelians who followed his lead now argued that Darwin's theory could finally be put to rest: not natural selection, working on continuous variation produced mainly by the organism's environmentally or developmentally directed needs, but rather discontinuous evolution based on spontaneous discrete mutations to genes, oblivious to life conditions and to the organism's proceedings, was responsible for changes in the species. Natural selection became superfluous.

Besides the Mendelians, orthogenists such as Louis Agassiz of Harvard and Henry Fairfield Osborn of the American Museum of Natural History argued for evolution along straight, pre-determined

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lines, fixed and oblivious once again to Darwin's natural selection. Orthogenists lovingly embraced the example of the moribund giant Irish elk, because in their account its pre-ordained trajectory had produced larger and larger antlers that weighed down on its head, ultimately leading to its extinction. (Natural selection could not have been the agent, because nature would select only advantageous or adaptive traits.) Lamarckism, too, now once again raised its head, pitting itself against the Weismann-style evolution now called Darwinism, amnesia having fogged over Darwin's own view of the inheritance of acquired traits acting as a complementary principle to natural selection. Darwinian evolution, or at least what people now called Darwinism, was under attack from every possible direction.

Yet it was becoming clear, too, that neither pure Lamarckism nor orthogenesis nor even Mendelism could serve as the final and complete account of nature's ways. For Mendelism could explain adaptations only by claiming that somehow or other the "right" mutations came about. This was tantamount to advocating a mysterious hand, or the improbable probabilities of chance. Orthogenesis, on the other hand, was simply the heir to Owen's brand of idealism, trying as it did to explain away adaptationism by positing fixed trajectories from which animals and plants could not escape. And Lamarckism drew fire because, among other problems, it was not entirely clear how the body manages to distinguish useful acquired characteristics from less felicitous ones. Why, one had to wonder, should the blacksmith's son inherit his muscular forearms but not his badly injured back or his burn-scarred hands?

Enter the mathematical population geneticists to the rescue. As more became known about the action of genes—primarily through work done in Thomas Hunt Morgan's "Fly Room" at Columbia University on the fruit fly *Drosophila melanogaster*—clever English mathematicians such as the bearded genius R. A. Fisher and the "playful alert walrus" J. B. S. Haldane (of whom it was said that he was the last man to know everything), together with their somewhat more sedate American colleague Sewall Wright, calculated with little more than pen and pencil that the selection of small mutations could produce the evolution that Darwin had promised and fashion organisms fit for their environments. By defining evolution as the differential survival of genes in a population over time, these three men wedded Mendel's discrete genes with Darwin's gradual evolution by natural selection in what became known as the grand evolutionary synthesis.

Lamarckism and orthogenesis now seemed unnecessary. If evolution was based on a random, natural process of selection of mutations, then all teleology could now be stripped away and biology could finally take its place besides physics and chemistry as a respectable, quantifiable science. Neo-Darwinism painted an evolutionary picture based on the selection of genes and genes alone—only changes to genes (mutations), as opposed to morphologies or to behaviors, now constituted evolution. Moreover, neo-Darwinism consecrated the complete divide between nature and nurture, organism and environment. Natural selection acted on internal mutations that arose randomly, with no care for, or direction from, the organism's needs. Neo-Darwinism was really neo-Weismannism, and it would take over as the reigning paradigm in biology for the rest of the twentieth century. Finalism had been extracted, but at the price of shutting out Darwin's own broad view of the sources of variation. The prophet's name had been appropriated, yet his words had been misunderstood.

III.

NOW THINGS GET EVEN MORE interesting. In their beautifully written and impressively argued new book, Jablonka and Lamb show that the evidence from more than fifty years of molecular, behavioral, and linguistic studies forces us to re-evaluate our inherited understanding of evolution. Neo-Darwinism has become dogma, but too many anomalies are now apparent to permit us blithely to maintain the orthodox view, at least without bending the evidence further and further to fit the theory. A quiet revolution is sweeping over biology, even if not all biologists are aware of it. For it turns out that there is much more to evolution than simply the differential inheritance of genes, and also that the variation on which natural selection acts is not always random in origin or blind to func-

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tion: new heritable variation can arise as a response to the conditions of life.

Let us start with the second proposition. If it sounds to modern ears like complete heresy—we were all taught in grade school that Lamarckism was dead—the answer is that it is and it isn't. This is because there are two distinct meanings of the term "Lamarckism." Most biologists take Lamarckism to mean the direct adaptive feedback from the soma to the germ line—the sullying of Weismann's immortal river; and in this sense Lamarckism is indeed extinct. There is no inheritance of acquired traits, if by inheritance we mean that changes to the DNA of the body are transmitted directly to the DNA of the sex cells and on to the next generation. So Darwin's provisional hypothesis of pangenesis is wrong not only because pangenes do not exist, and therefore cannot acquire memory from the environment that they transmit to the sex cells, but also because sex cells do not acquire DNA changes that have occurred to the body, full stop.

But this does not mean that we are back to plain old random mutation. Consider the impressive ability of certain bacteria to increase the mutation rate of a specific gene involved in the metabolism of a given amino acid (a component of its diet) precisely when that amino acid becomes scarce in the bacteria's environment. How on earth can this simple single-celled creature accomplish what is obviously a complex reactive computational trick? Until recently, it has been assumed that mutations are non-adaptive and not developmentally controlled, but such examples suggest otherwise. If the apparatus responsible for increasing the mutation rate of the specific gene (which increases the chance of bringing about a variant that will be able to produce the necessary amino acid) is itself heritable, then the conclusion must be that adaptive changes can arise not only from natural selection of random (though "fit") DNA, but also from the action of evolved internal systems that generate non-random "guesses" in response to environmental challenges. Chance will indeed favor the prepared genome. "Rather than being restricted to contemplating a slow process depending on random (i.e., blind) genetic variation and gradual phenotypic change," Jablonka and Lamb quote the geneticist James Shapiro, "we are now free to think in realistic molecular ways about rapid genome restructuring guided by biological feedback networks."

So mutations can sometimes be "instructed," or non-random. This is the case with the genetic system, the first and historically dominant dimension of heredity discussed in Jablonka and Lamb's book. But Darwin said nothing about changes to DNA, because DNA was unknown in Darwin's day. And precisely because Darwin was innocent of any true knowledge of the hereditary substance, he held a much broader and more pluralistic notion of what constitutes heredity in the first place. In fact, it is perfectly possible to be a loyal Darwinian without being a Mendelian, for it turns out that natural selection is not as genocentric as twentieth-century biologists have been. Unconstrained by intellectual fashions or shortcomings, it does not insist on moving all valuable information through Weismann's germ line.

From a consideration of Jablonka and Lamb's second proposition, we have come to a consideration of the first: the notion that variation is not always random is intimately connected to the notion that there is much more to heredity than simply the passing of genes from one generation to the next. A beautiful analogy provided by the authors helps to make the point. Think of a piece of music represented by a system of notes that we call the score. The relationship between the score and the music is analogous to the genotype/phenotype distinction: only the genotype (the score) is transmitted from generation to generation, while the phenotype (the particular performance, or interpretation, of the score) is not. As Weismann instructed, changes in the genotype (mutations) are passed on, but changes in the phenotype (acquired characters) are not.

Now consider what happened to music with the invention of the tape recorder. Interpretations of the score, and not just the score itself, could be passed on from one generation to the next. And while in the past only changes to the score could alter changes to performances, sound recording made it possible for a particularly popular performance to lead to notational changes being incorporated in the score that make it easier for the interpretation to be reproduced. The very mechanisms that produce variation, claim Jablonka and Lamb, have undergone evolution, and the variation that they produce is not all genetic.

Here is an example. Every cell in the body has the exact same DNA, but the particular pattern of genes that is expressed during development helps to turn one cell into heart tissue, and another into the brain, and another into the liver. If DNA is a recipe for a cake, then development is the process of baking. The molecular machinery responsible for the differential expression of genes (baking) is itself made not of DNA but mostly of protein, and it is referred to as the epigenetic system (from the Greek *epi*, meaning beside). We have known for a while that the way a cake is baked can affect which ingredients are expressed in the final product, even if they all exist to begin with in the original batter. But if the epigenetic baking apparatus is itself heritable and influenced by the organisms' interaction with the environment, then the neo-Darwinian divide between nature and nurture collapses, and the incorporation of the organisms' needs into its biology once again emerges as an important part of evolution. The salient point is that while the environment has traditionally been viewed as the agent of selection, determining which variants survive and reproduce, it actually helps to determine which variants are there to be selected in the first place, too, because of the role it plays in development, or the baking of the cake.

Shakespeare's nature/nurture alliteration comes apart once again when we consider animal behavior. Take the case of macaque monkeys living on the small Japanese island of Koshima. When researchers in the 1950s began using sweet potatoes to lure them from the forest to the coast (where they were easier to observe), a funny thing happened. A female named Imo ("potato" in Japanese) began to wash her potato before eating it, and the practice caught on. Soon the monkeys were washing the potatoes in the ocean before eating them—a clever means of seasoning. A few years later, Imo figured

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out how to solve another problem: the wheat that was being placed on the beach for the monkeys' consumption was invariably full of sand, so Imo took the pile and threw it into the ocean, where the sand sank and the wheat floated pristinely on the surface. The new habit spread from the young to the adults, and then from mothers to children. (Adult males, it must be said, were the last to learn, since they interact the least with the young.) Soon a whole new culture developed: infants who were being carried by their mothers in the ocean became used to the water, and began to dive and even to swim in it. Hungry adult males began eating fish that the fishermen had discarded, and before long a culture of fishing had sprung up. So what began as the clever behavior of one individual blossomed into a new culture for the entire group. Animals, as Darwin appreciated more than the Darwinians did, are not passive subjects of selection, because their own activities affect the adaptive value of their genetic and behavioral variations.

The really fascinating thing is that behavioral variation might actually be incorporated or assimilated over time into the genes, such that a behavior that was once learned, or copied, becomes genetic first nature. Genetic assimilation, or the Baldwin Effect, provides a mechanism whereby a non-genetic trait that is acquired, whether epigenetically (a particular packaging of the DNA) or through a learned or copied behavior (such as birdsong, or even washing potatoes), can be transmitted between generations and ultimately incorporated into an organism's biology. This can happen in two ways: an environmental challenge may induce developmental changes that unmask a lot of existing genetic variation, which can then be captured by natural selection; or, since cultural (and epigenetic) variation can move much faster then genetic variation, it may create a holding situation until the "right" mutations show up.

This idea might help to explain the origins of the ability that sets humans apart, more than any other species, from the rest of the animal kingdom: language. Elements of what began as a non-genetic, learned behavior were slowly assimilated into the genes, ultimately providing humans with a kind of innate language organ that allows babies to learn languages with hardly any instruction at all. Notice that genetic assimilation is not naïve Lamarckism, because it ultimately depends on genes; but it is not naïve neo-Darwinism either, because random mutations and selection are mediated by the organism's behavior and development to produce adaptive instincts. New learned behaviors acquired during development (and often only during a well-defined window of time) construct the environment in which genetic variations are selected.

Epigenetic, behavioral, and cultural-symbolic evolution are more channeled than genetic evolution. The targeted or constructed variation that they produce may smell to some like a Lamarckian form of evolution smacking of the old teleology—the finalism that Darwin tried to dismiss when he rejected the prevalent explanation for the glowing marine zoophytes—because it makes it sound as if variation arose on purpose. But of course, as Jablonka and Lamb write, "it is simply a consequence of the various inheritance systems and the way they respond to internal and external influences." Nature may be blind, but it is more than the mere sum of endless tosses of the genetic dice. Since information may be passed from generation to generation through channels other than the genes alone, the game of life is less a game of chance and necessity, as the great French biologist Jacques Monod called it, and more a game of chance, development, and necessity. "A devil, a born devil, whose nature nurture could not pick, and whose nurture nature cannot kick": this would have been a less musical but more accurate way for Shakespeare to have penned Prospero's line.

IN THE END, A BROADER VIEW OF heredity might help to solve age-old perplexities, such as the origin of novel structures like the wings of birds or the flippers of once-terrestrial whales. Even more dramatically, it may provide a much firmer basis for the appearance during evolution of what the imagination-challenged proponents of intelligent design nonsensically refer to as examples of "irreducible complexity," such as the eye, the brain, or the kidney. Darwin, with Lamarck, may have failed in trying to describe a system of heredity, but he grasped a basic truth, or the second, "softer" meaning of Lamarckism: that the fit between an organism and its environment is much tighter and more intimate than would be expected if natural selection always acted on totally random variation. Explaining nature's perfection would be very difficult indeed if there existed no mechanisms to allow somehow for the transmission and the assimilation of acquired information, even if this information is not strictly genetic.

While Jablonka and Lamb have provided a cogent and impressive theoretical basis for such an argument, there is still much experimental work to be done. In the midst of the present controversies about evolutionism and creationism, this scientific path is a better one to follow, I think, than the re-iteration of an outdated neo-Darwinian theory or the defensive admission that Darwin was a religious pluralist (he was—so what?) and really a teleological theist (which he most assuredly was not). Intelligent design is an important political issue, but scientifically and intellectually it is a hollow subject. The truly interesting reflection is taking place not in some real or imagined Bible Belt or in the backwaters of a needlessly dogmatic neo-Darwinian establishment, but right under our noses, in the fascinating new insights springing from the scientific realm of evolutionary theory itself. ■

CORRESPONDENCE

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academic career at Columbia. When I took his course "The United States in the time of De Tocqueville," during my senior year at Columbia, Hofstadter was already a bright star in the history department's firmament (which boasted a galaxy of bright stars), having written *The American Political Tradition* and having won the Pulitzer Prize for *The Age of Reform*. Yet, unlike many senior professors, he felt that he had an obligation to teach undergraduate students—an obligation he could have easily shirked. Every week, the five of us lucky few who had been admitted to his senior seminar crowded into his book-lined office in Hamilton Hall, where we were treated to coffee, tea, and his trenchant commentary on historical issues. Most important of all, he was always considerate, accessible, and helpful to me and my seminar colleagues—and never condescending. Studying under Richard Hofstadter was a wonderful experience, and I will always remember him as a very decent man as well as a great historian.

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Riverdale, New York

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WASHINGTON DIARIST

Traitor

THERE'S A POPULAR MIDDLE Eastern restaurant my wife and I patronize just about every time we visit my parents in suburban Detroit. The first time we went there, I recall, my dad raised the worrisome prospect that some portion of the money we spent might be diverted to some unsavory cause. But we quickly banished the thought, because it seemed brutally unfair. The overwhelming majority of Arab Americans are loyal to this country, and you can't use an ethnic stereotype to punish some immigrant small businessman. Plus, the food is really, really delicious. They serve a mind-boggling combination of hummus and grilled lamb, a fattoush salad tastier than any I've sampled elsewhere, pita loaves piping hot from the oven ... but I digress. As it turns out, the restaurant's owner *is* supporting terrorists, at least according to the Department of Justice, which announced this disconcerting news a couple of months ago. The owner allegedly maintains "connections at the highest levels" with Hezbollah, according to court documents. On top of that, he has allegedly engaged in tax evasion on a massive scale. So that pretty much violates all my core political convictions right there. The experience of learning that I have been subsidizing militant Islamist guerrillas—via a tax cheat, no less—is a new one for me. It has prompted several emotions: *remorse* (did my fattoush salad sponsor a rocket attack?), *denial* (it's possible Hassan Nasrallah used my fattoush money to build a hospital or something, right?), *paranoia* (can the Bush administration declare me an enemy combatant?), and, finally, *self-pity* (what am I going to eat the next time I'm in Detroit?). It is in that final stage where I remain today. My only consolation is that I'm not alone. A few weeks ago, a Michigan-based friend excitedly informed me that he had dinner at this fantastic Middle Eastern joint. I told him I had some bad news.

ALSO WORKING THROUGH HIS EMOtions toward the Middle East right now is Chris Matthews. In a recent broadcast, Matthews declared, "[President Bush] didn't have any philosophy when he went in, and they handed it to him—these guys with ... you know, the guys you used to make fun of at school, the pencilnecks, the intellectuals, the guys you never trusted." So now we know the true sinister influence behind the Iraq war: nerds. Nerds have always been, of course, the favorite target of demagogues, and this latest attempt to scapegoat them is steeped in the usual illogic. Far from being nerds, Donald Rumsfeld and Dick Cheney are gruff former jocks, and distinctly thick of neck. And the more we learn about the bungling of the war, the more we discover that it was precisely Bush, Cheney, and Rumsfeld's propensity to *ignore* the geeks in the bureaucracy that has made it such a fiasco. Yet Matthews appears ever more deeply wedded to his blame-the-nerds theory. In another recent broadcast, he asked Pat Buchanan:

> When are we going to notice that the neocons don't know what they're talking about? They're not looking at this country's long-term interests. They're bound up in regional and global ideology, and they have had no experience—I'll say it again—in even a schoolyard fight. They don't know what physical fighting is all about. They went to school and were intellectuals, but they want our government to be their big brother. I don't get it. I don't know why we keep falling for it—and the president, you say is he free of these guys yet or not?

Buchanan replied, "I certainly hope the president is not listening to them, because I really question whether they've got America's national interest at heart."

A MORE SUSPICIOUS MIND MIGHT DETECT in this some ugly insinuations, but I prefer to take Matthews's theory at face value. Maybe he truly believes that participating in schoolyard brawls is necessary training for the successful conduct of foreign policy. (Perhaps the young George F. Kennan formed the nascent outlines of his worldview in the elementary school latrine, while administering swirlies to the pencilnecks.) There is, of course, a long-standing belief that only veterans have the moral standing to support wars. Matthews, who never joined the military himself, is simply defining the relevant combat experience more broadly than has been traditionally done. In this novel schema, the heroes are those who braved the horrors of fighting—be it during wartime or recess. They stand across an unshakable psychological divide from mere civilians who remained behind in the safety of, respectively, the home front or the monkey bars. Buchanan, for instance, was a notorious bully as a youth. No doubt this experience accounts for the subtlety of his foreign policy thinking.

WHERE BUCHANAN LIKES TO FLAY JEWS for putting Israel's interests above America's, David Gelernter, writing in *The Weekly Standard*, flays Jews for failing to do so. Neoconservatives, of course, have spent much of the last three decades scolding liberal Jews for our insufficient tribalism. Gelernter, however, has a distinctive contribution to the genre, which he elevates to the level of self-parody. His novel touch is to insist that left-wing Jews should vote Republican *even when Democratic candidates support Israel*, because *other* Democratic voters may not:

> When you vote for a presidential candidate, you are voting to award jobs to a few of his supporters, and influence to vast numbers of them. Most Democratic politicians speak up for Israel. But grassroots Democrats are increasingly dangerous to the Jewish state (not to mention the American state).

So, when Democrats buck some of their base to support Israel, the proper response of pro-Israel Jews is to vote against them anyway, even if you agree with them on everything. The overriding imperative is to keep anti-Zionists from securing a foothold within the Fish and Wildlife Service. Gelernter is so enraged that liberal Jews fail to see this obvious political logic that he hurls at us his strongest insult, which is to compare us to Palestinians: "[Jewish liberals'] behavior is a lesson in self-destructive nihilism that could teach even the Palestinians a thing or two." He quickly notes that he means this only as an analogy. "American Jews," he writes, "are not Palestinians and have not sunk to the level of supporting terrorist murderers." Thank goodness Gelernter doesn't know about me.

JONATHAN CHAIT

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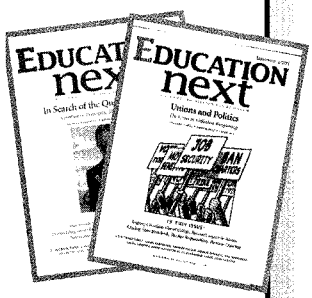

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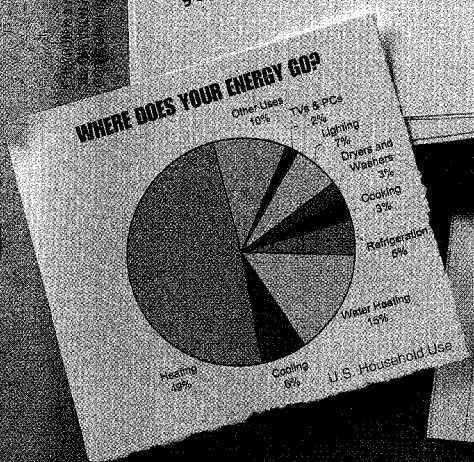

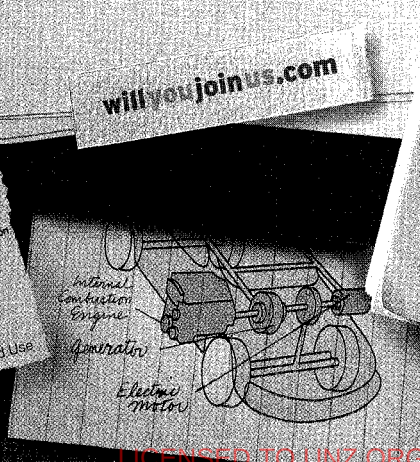

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